



The sole-talke of the Soule.

Or,

A spirituall and heauenlie Dialogue
betwixt the Soule of Man
and G O D.

Which, for the great affinitie it
hath with other bookes of the Auctor
published heeretofore in our
natiue tongue, is now
entituled

{ *The fourth booke of the* }
Imitation of Christ. }

Translated and corrected
by

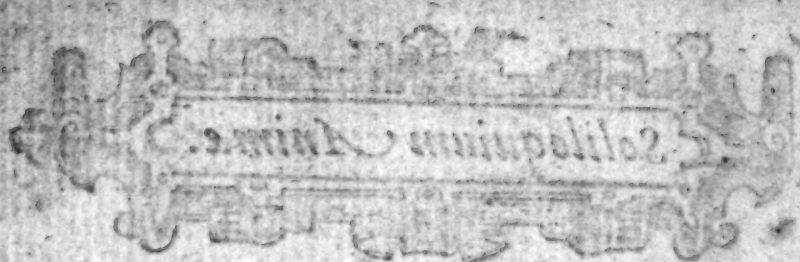
THOMAS ROGERS.

Neuer before published.

¶ At London Printed.

And are to be folde in the Royall Exchange
at the Shop of Andrew Maunsell.

1 5 9 2.



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The fourth booke of the
Trinitie of Christ.

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To the Christian Reader.



Eing much
and earnest-
lie requested
heere-unto,
I haue pub-

lished in our vulgar tongue
another of Mallecolus, aliàs
Thom.de Kempis, or, Kem-
pifius workes: not that I con-
fesse, which of some well wee-
ning, though not so well dee-
ming persons was commen-
ded vnto mee, I meane, that
in the old English translation,
and in some Latine copies too,
called, The fourth Booke of
the Imitation of Christe,

To the Christian
which in deede is altogether
De sacramento altaris, and
so entitled : but the next to
that in Kempisius workes,
namelie, the Soliloquium a-
nimæ. This I haue tearmed,
for the great affinitie it hath
with the bookes of Kempisius
by mee heeretofore diuulged,
The fourth booke of the I-
mitation of Christ.

In the dooing whereof, I
haue as little as might bee
varied frō the auctors words
and phrazes, and no where
from the sense, but where
himselſe hath varied from
the truth of God, and, I doubt
not, world haue redressed, had
hee liued in these daies of
light, as he did in the time of
most palpable blindness.

And this haue I doon with
the

Reader.

the greater alacritie, because I finde (and thou maist reade it also in the Auctors owne Preface) that hee not onlie doubted that hee might utter some things both fonde and offensue, but also wished to haue some godlie corrector of his faultes, and praied vnto almightie God grationuslie to reueale, such thinges offensue, either vnto himselfe, or vnto some other.

Whose godlie praier, God hath heard, and discovered those things for thy benefit, and testification besides howe Kempisius, the Auctor, howsoever liuing in a Popish time, was yet in hart no Papist, but would like well of that which is doon, as I trust thou wilt, whose adisieng, and spirituall
comfor-

To the Christian Reader.
comforting, I haue onlie aimed at.

*And reaping this comfort
to thy soule, by the reading or
hearing of this treatise, bee
thankfull vnto thy God that
giueth thee some taste of the
caelestiall ioies in this miserable
and all-trooblesome
world, to whose gracious
protection, I doo
most humblie commend thee and
my selfe.*

The



The Authors

Preface.



Haue gathered together into a little booke for my comfort sake, certaine deuoute sentences, the better so to commit them to memorie; I haue also disposed them as into a plesant orchard, set out with all sorts of trees, and bewtified with al varieties of goodlie flowres, where-into I might now and then enter both for to chuse and behold at my neede such matter as my hart desires for the refreshing of the minde, griued at anie time, and overwhelmed with penfuenes.

Now the more cleerlie, and readilie to finde vnder which arbor I might repose my selfe, or which floure were best to be culled out, I haue made the
heads

The Authors Preface.

heads of euery Chapter to glitter (as it were) with red titles. I haue likewise with varietie of words, as nowe talking, nowe reasoning, praieng nowe, nowe conferring, now in mine owne, now in another mans person, bewreathed about the text with a sweete, and delightfome stile.

Wherefore I entreate them whosoeuer shall reade it, first that they be not moued with indignation at that which the writer hath doon, for it was his minde wholie to talke (with his God.) Next, that theie wil pardon the imperfectiō, and plainnes of the stile, considering that God is more delighted with words that be simple and pure, than with those that be artificiall. And if happelie the sense in anie place appeare either not sounde, or not cleere enough, my

The Authors Preface.

my desire is to haue a godlie corrector of the same, telling him withall, that what sonde matter soeuer he shall espie, it hath escaped from me not of purpose, but rather for that I was not heedie enough in marking what I writ.

Moreouer, forasmuch as man in that iudgement of his which is most probable, maie be deceaued, vnto thee, ô God almightie, and father of lightes, doe I thine humble disciple make recourse, and this Sole-talke (of mine) doe present before thy diuine Maiestie, to the ende that thou maist both approve the things well said, and disproue what is doon amisse, and insinuate also either into my selfe, or some other faithfull seruaut of thine, more rightlie to obserue whatsoeuer things are offensive.

My

The Authors Preface.

My request is also, holie Father, that I thy poore seruant may obtaine at thy hands both time and space to abide in the all plentifull pastures of the Scriptures, which be and shall be my chiefeft comfort, vntill that daie of æternitie appeere, and the shadowe of mortalitie doe decline awaie. And therefore withdrawe thou frome me all vnprofitable cares, worldlie desires, hurtfull affections, and what else may hinder mee from my desired leisure. For he must haue a free minde and a quiet, that would meditate of hidden and heauenlie matters. Wherefore that I maie be worthie to attaine my sute, vouchsafe thou (my God) to endue and fill me with the grace of thine heauenlie ioie, that I maie speake to thy glorie, and to some comfort of my owne soule.



The fourth Booke of *the Imitation of* Christ.

CHAPTER. I.

1. A longing of the soule after God.
2. *The incomprehensible maiestie of*
the Lord. 3. An exhortation
to the loue of God.

SOULE.



*S*for mee, it is

good to drawe neere
vnto God ^a.

^aPsal 73,
verse 28.

O short, and so
sweete saieng, em-
bracing God, and
abandoning the vniuersall world!

What more can be said? And what
more-ouer is to be desired? Would
it not suffice if that were performed
which now is spoken? And were o-

B I

ther,

The fourth booke

ther, yea many other things vitered,
should not all in the end be reduced
vnto this one thing?

Therefore, my soule, saie thou
with the Prophet, *As for mee, it is good*

^b Psal. 73, 28 *to drawe neere vnto God*.

O my God, thou art mine onlie
^c Luk. 18, 19 felicitie; thou alone art good^c, and
sweet vnto mee.

To speake of thee it delighteth the
louer; to thinke of thee, it liketh the
religious, whose hart is not fixed
^d Math. 6, 21 vpon the world^d, but hidden with
Coloss. 3, 1. thee in the heauens, to the end that

^a both thou alone maiest be his true
^e Phil. 4, 7 peace^e, and inmost ioye; and he not
vexed dailie in this world, where
false concupiscence doth prouoke
^f 1. Iohn 2, vnto sin^f.

¹⁶ O my God, how is hee affected,
^g Rom. 8, 35 which is inflamed with thy loue^g /
^{36, &c.} How doth hee reioice, that hath no
^h Cor 13, 4 pleasure in anie vaine creature!
^{5, &c.}

Are not these the words of such a
man in that Psalm, whereout the
beginning of my speech was taken,
euen these his words?

ⁱ Psal. 73, 25 *Whome haue I in heauen but theeⁱ?*
and I haue desired none in the earth with
thee?

MAN.

MAN. O holie soule, & zealous
soule,

of the Imitation of Christ.

soule, so longing after God! What is that I heare? what is that thou saiest? Are the things both in heauen and in earth but small things in thine eies?

SOVLE. Surelie I take all things **SOVLE.** but for trifles.

MAN. What then seekest thou? **MAN.** Whome would you haue without these? And where will you finde him if not in these things?

Hath he either name, or place, or habitation to be sought by?

Where is the place where his honor dwelleth? of which in a certaine psalme thou sangest, saying:

1 Psal. 36, 8.

O Lord, I haue loued the habitation of thine house; and the place where thine honor dwelleth.

Make answer, I praie thee. For, if thou canst, show mee him, I will go with thee, and wee will seeke him together, yea and he shall be thy God, and my God: and wee shall be full happie when wee haue found him, and hold him.

SOVLE. What aske you this at **SOVLE.** mine hands? Or whie so curiouselie do you enquire of this matter of me? Thinke you I can, or am able to vtter such things? What though gladlie I would,

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would, conceaue not yet, that what through the rarenes of the thing, and the deepnes of the mysterie, I am restrained back?

What aske you mee? Aske them who haue both heard and seene, they are such as better can describe him whome you seeke.

But rather aske him that knoweth
k Psal. 94, 8 all things^k. For he it is, of whome we
9 speake, that both best can tell you
10 who himselfe is, yea and best declare
Psal 119, 12 the place of his owne aboade. Euen
1 Psal 94, 12 he it is (and none other) which reacheth
man knowledge^l, and giueth
m Iam. 4, 6 his grace also to the humble^m.

Make recourse vnto him which reuealeth himselfe when hee will, and
n Mat. 11, 25 to whome he willⁿ, neither is there
anie beside him that can open. Hee
alone can reueale to thee what the
o 1. Cor. 2, 9 ioie is of such as loue him^o, and that
far more excellentlie than I can tell
you.

MAN. But why speake you on this wise, o holie and humble Soule? Thinke not that I would know that of you, which neither ought to bee knownen, nor can bee vttered. Keep your secret to your selfe; let your doore still abide shut vpon you: let
the

of the Imitation of Christ.

the scale of faith remaine vncancelled, neither let the vale, for me, be removed from the sanctuarie.

Eate you holie bread (by your selfe) in the chappell, go in into the tabernacle of your house, ascend into the vpper parlor, enter into the cellar of the eternall king, or, which is more noble, and soundeth more sweetlie, euen into the bride-chamber of your celestially spouse.

I know it is written *p*, *It is not good* *p* Mat. 15, 26
to take the childrens bread, and to cast it
to whelps. I know this, I saie, and haue
read it: but marke againe what fol-
loweth, and take pittie vpon me, ac-
cording to the words of her that said
9, The whelps doe eate of the cromaes, *9* Mat. 15, 27
which fall from their maisters table.

And therefore hide not that from
mee which I demaund, but of the
greatnes of your inward pleasures,
poure-out euen a sparckle of the fire
loue. Giue me one small drop of pre-
cious wine, send forth some little fa-
uour of the best ointment, whose
chiefest part and louelie comfort is
well and vsuallie knowne to thee,
that I also maie taste thereof.

Whie linger you? Satisfie my de-
fire, and open the doore to a frend

The fourth booke

now at this third knock.

O beloued, speake of the welbeloued; let not mee bee neglected.

If you cannot describe him rightlie as he is, yet speake of him so well as you can. For indeed as he is, who is able to describe him? Yea, who is able to conceaue the describer?

Therefore, if not, as in himselfe he is: yet tell me what thou thinkest of him. It not what to himselfe: yet utter out how good hee hath bin to thee.

For who euer shall search forth what he is in himselfe?

Thou wilt neuer doo it, because thou hast plainlie confessed, and not denied, how speaking of him.
 1 Psal. 139, 6

Thy knowledge is too wonderfull for me: it is so high, that I cannot attaine vnto it.

7 *Whether shall I goe from thy Spirit?*

If then thou art not able to knowe thine owne spirit, which the creator
 1 Act. 17, 25 and quickner of all spirits hath
 1 Gen. 2, 7 made, how at anie time wilt thou knowe him which is vncreated? Did not this make thee all amazed to
 1 Psal. 35, 10 saie, O Lord, who is like vnto thee?

Notwithstanding, of all frendship, by some similitude describe him, whose essence thou hast not yet attained

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rained vnto. Neither is it for you to denie to shoue him in part, whome you thinke can not wholie bee reuealed.

S. I must needs saie you are too curious, and importune vpon mee. Thou searchest all my priuities, and lettest in thine hand into the secrets of my chamber.

Hent thee vnto him, and comcest thou againe vnto mee? Seeke you mee or him?

But I praie you, of what spirit art thou? Bee still, I beseech thee, and trouble mee not. For whome thou seekest, hee is aboue mee.

M. But can hee that seeketh after God, so easilie giue ouer? Protract not to speake, for you maie comfort mee forth with. How long will you keepe mee in suspense? What doo you saie and vnfaie?

As I liue I will not giue ouer, except you blesse mee. For I compt it a blessing, if thou shoue mee my God.

Now therefore if thou hast scene him, tell mee plainlie, and I will take him vpon my shoulders.

S. I knowe thou hast a great desire, and a loue vnto the creator.

The fourth booke

But a great thing is it which you require at mine hands, and such a thing as I am in doubt whether it maie be done or no.

Hee whome thou seekest, knoweth it right well: for it is not in mee to let thee know so much.

Your demaund seemeth vnto mee to be like that of the Spouse which in
 * Sal. S. 1, 6 the Songs did saie *;

Show mee, o thou, whome my soule loveth, where thou feedest.

Wilt thou then learne of me who this is, or what good hee hath done with mee? Doubtlesse it is not in mee to show you.

But you are not content, neither his greatnes, who exceedeth the hea-
 * 1. Kin. 8. 27 uens *, can deterre you; nor my weakenes, which in his eyes am nothing, make you to desist.

Whie hast thou laid this burden vpon mee? I am not able to tell thee, vntill I goe into the sanctuarie of
 * Psa. 73, 17 God *, and vnderstand the same.

Whie are you so desirous to know that, which maie not be vttered?

M. And will you not? Oh, how faine would I bee instructed! For those things wee are most earnest to know, which the most hardlie maie bee reuea-

of the Imitation of Christ.

reuealed.

Notwithstanding, once againe I praie you be not so hard, as altogether to be silent.

Thinke not that forthwith I will vtter what you shall saie vnto our enemies. I will keepe your saieng as a friend, yea, as a verie friend ought to doo.

You maie boldlie tell mee your mind secretlie. Lo, wee two be heere alone; neither I with lightnes, nor you with arrogancie are delighted, but in him which hath giuen vs vnderstanding, euen of him will wee speake.

And if happelic he come while we are talking, let vs giue place, and let him be betweene vs. If he vouchsafe to speake, let vs heare him gladlie, and bee silent till hee haue done. At which time you shall not be bound to satisfie my demaundes. For when he speaketh, all flesh must be still.

S. This couenant I like well. Onlie let him bee with vs, and bee wee carried vnto our secret places. Let him bee the guide of our speech, and conduct vs whether our delight is to goe.

This beloued of whome you so

b s

dili-

The fourth booke

diligentlie enquire, is for his great-
^a Psal. 139, 6 nes vnspeakeable ^a, for his hight and
^b Iob. 9, 10 glorie incomprehensible ^b; for his
¹¹ strength and magnificence infinite ^c;
^c Psalm. 8, 1 Whatsoever is either spoken or writ-
² ten of him, commeth far behinde his
 maiestie, because in glorie he excel-
 leth all things.

The heauens haue sayd, He hath
^d 2. Chro. 6, ouerpasse, and ascended, and pre-
 uailed ouer vs ^d.
 verse 18.

The earth hath answered; If the
 heauens, and the heauens of hea-
 uens doe not comprehend him, aske
 not me of him ^e.

^e Psalm. 139, 7 The stars haue song; Wee are
 8, &c. darkenes and not light, vnlesse hee
 f Gene. 1, 1, inlighten vs ^f.

^{2, &c.} The sea trembled, and sayd, Hee is
 Psalm. 139, 12 not in mee, and the deepe knoweth
 him not.

Heare you what they saie

M. I heard, and was sore troubled; at
 their voice my verie lips trembled.

S. What then will become of thee if
 wee should aske him? Let vs speake
 vnto him.

O Lord, art thou hee of whome
 the Prophets haue prophecied, and
 whose commandement all things in
 their seasons doe obeie?

Verelie

of the Imitation of Christ.

Verelie I am that I am ^s; and besides me there is none other God^h; I am the beginning and the endingⁱ; I am the creator^k, and the gouernor^l of all things. I liue faith the Lorde, and I will raigne for euer and euer.

G O D.

8 Exo. 3, 14

h Deut. 4, 35

Psal. 18, 31

Isai. 45, 21.

i Reuel. 1, 8

k Isai. 42, 5

Act. 17, 24.

l Hebr. 1, 3

Iohn. 5, 17.

Now little worme what saiest thou, being enuironed with such light?

S O U L E.

L^o, thy beloued, whome thou thoughtest was with mee, speaketh vnto thee.

Hee was with mee when I said ^m, *For mee it is good to draw neere vnto God.* ^m Psal. 73, 28
Hee will bee with thee, if thou also wilt saie, ⁿ *My soule refuseth comfort:* ⁿ Psal. 77, 2
the daie of miserie I desire not °, for thou art my King and my God p. ^o Ier. 17, 16
^p Psal. 5, 2

Bee not like to raging louers, but loue God alone, seeke him alone, which admitteth no companion of the world into his fellowship.

Talke thou onlie with him, and though he depart, leauing the roome void, beare all things patientlie. For his woont is, to goe and to come, to prooue his freend, and make him perfect

The fourth booke

perfect in louing.

If thou desire his presence, beare his absence patientlie. Waite, and waite againe, hee will depart for a while, and after a while hee will againe returne.

Loue maketh thee thus affected, which now heaueth thee on high, and straightwaie flingeth to the ground againe.

His loue is than all floures sweeter; than lilies fairer; and brighter than the pretious stones.

For no creature is to be preferred before the loue of God, and therefore for that euerie thing is to bee despised.

Mat. 10, 37
Mat. 16, 26
Luke. 9, 25

So soone as I was touched inwardlie with his loue, I forthwith began to be inflamed in my minde, that bidding adue to all things in the world, I onlie wished for his most pure embracements, and, as it were bearing hote coales out of a burning ouen, I vittered these words, which but few doo vse.

Psal. 73, 25

Whome haue I in heauen but thee;
and I haue desired none in the earth with thee. God is the strength of mine head, and my portion for euer.

By these gather now of thy beloved

of the Imitation of Christ.

ued what manner a one and what he is, which incomprehensiblie exceedeth all the things which are, and haue being.

And although he can neither by words be vttered, nor conceaued in minde, because he is infinite: yet is he verie louelie, tractable, felowlie, and to be entreated, insomuch as though hee cannot be comprehended, yet after a strange manner hee maie be loued. Iob. 23, 8
9

For by loue hee is taken, yea by loue fast bounden: but by desire, he is sought; by praier, knocked at; and by hope attained.

If as yet I haue not satisfied you, let him, whome you haue sought, satisfie you, and teach you, aboue all teachers, to finde himselfe.



CHAP.

CHAP. 2.

1. Of God his distinct iudgement at
the end of this world. 2. The cursed
state of the vngodlie.



*Kit mine heart
unto thee, O Lord, that
I maie feare thy name ^a.*

^a Psal. 86, 11

O my God, thou
art much to be loued,
yea, and to be feared

^b Psal. 96, 4 much thou art ^b.

Hee that loueth, let him be glad;
but hee that loueth not thee, let
him quake and feare. But hee which
neither doth feare thee, nor loue
thee, is ytterlic foolish and franke.
For, it is a fearefull thing to fall into

^c Heb. 10, 31 shine hands ^c.

And, who knoweth the power of thy
^d Psal. 90, 11 wrath ^d? Or, who maie abide the daie of
^e Mala. 3, 2 thy comming unto iudgements ^e?

For, thy roaring shall be like a
^f Isai 5, 29 Lion ^f; and thy glittering swoorde
like a consuming fire.

At the sound of thy voice all the
dwellers in the world shall be mo-
ued; and when thou comest, all
the foundations of the earth shall
shake.

of the Imitation of Christ.

shake 8.

Who then but will feare? Or by what meanes can anie escape thine hands ^h?

5 2.Pet. 3, 7

Reuel. 6, 14

1 Psal. 139, 7

8, &c.

1 Isai. 1, 19

20, &c.

If a man will hide himselfe vpon the strong rock ⁱ, thou wilt thunder there-vpon, and it shall rent asunder. And if he lurke in caues, or mountaines, he shall be plucked out ^k, and be made to susteine thy displeasure ^l, because hee cared not for thy fauour.

1 Hose. 10, 8

Luke. 23, 30

1 Reuel. 6, 16

17

Reuel. 9, 6

1 Iob. 23, 10

Psal. 139, 7

8, &c.

Surelie there is no place which can hide man from thy presence ^m.

For all things are naked and open in thine eies ⁿ; thou seest the heart and the reines ^o, and beholdest the most secret affections of the thought, so that no secret is hid from thine eies ^p.

1 Hebr. 4, 13

1 Psalm. 7, 9

1 Eccles. 23

verse 19

20

O how terrible wilt thou bee to sinners, and to the hearts that be hardened ^q, which now doo glorie in ill dooing, and triumph in wickednes, saying, *The Lord seeth not ^r, hee will not regard ^s.*

1 Prom. 1, 24

25, &c.

1 Psal. 10, 12

1 Psal. 94, 7

They are so puffed vp with vaine words, as though thou wouldest neuer come: yea, they turne awaie their eies, that they may not see the ende.

But

The fourth booke

But in the houre that they thinke
 * Mat. 24, 44 not, thou wilt come ², and they shall
 * Luk. 21, 35 be taken in the snares ² of their owne
 wickednes. And as theeues and rob-
 bers being suddenlie taken are con-
 founded: so shall they be put to con-
 fusion at their due time.

Then wilt thou haue them in de-
 * Prou. 1, 26 rision ², which now deride thy ser-
 uants; and euill shall be rendred vn-
 to such as haue abhorred thy righ-
 teousnes.

Now they stop their eares vnto
 thy voice; but the time shall come,
 when they shall crie, and not bee
 heard.

Now they turne thy word into a
 fable: but themselues shall be turned
 * Mat. 25, 41 then into a flame of fire ². For thy
 word shall goe out with an horrible
 blaste; and it shall strike the wicked
 and vnbeleeuers without all mer-
 cie.

What will the proude person saie
 then, so puffed vp with knowledge,
 and swelling in power? What an-
 swere will hee make, when the last
 * 1. Cor. 15, 52 trumpe shall sounde in his eares ²?
 When thou Lord, our God, shalt
 * Mat. 24, 31 appeere in Maiestic, together with
 * 1. Thess. 4, 16 thine angels ^a and archangels ^b?

Then

of the Imitation of Christ.

Then all the vngodlie deriders of thy word shall bee hush; and they which haue molested thy seruants, ^cWisd. 5, 1
struken with an horrible feare. 3, &c.

Then shall they vtterlie bee confounded, which, laying a good conscience and honestie aside, gaue themselves to vanitie and wantonnes.

They shal suffer punishment then, which haue loosed the bridle vnto the flesh.

Then shall they roare towardes heauen, which now are cunning in vaine musick and daunces:

Then shall that bee turned into moorning, which hath bin contracted by inordinate pleasure:

They shall be bound vp in bundles together to be burned then ^d, which ^dMat. 13, 41
haue bin companions together at 42
dronkennes and bellie-cheere. And 43
whome loue hath bound in wickednes, the reuenging fire shall roule together in torments.

O yee foolish, and wretched, o yee frantike, and blinde louers of the world, what doo yee, what is your meaning? how will yee escape the vengeance of the Lord?

Why for a little pleasure which
you

The fourth booke

you doo loue, doo yee hasten vnto euerlasting torments? Whie feare yee not hell, which doo so feare a little penance? And, you which flie the death of the flesh, whie aforehand doo yee not take heed of the eternall death of the soule?

Vnlesse therefore yee doo conuert, and repent, yee shall neuer escape these horrible and fire torments of Gods displeasure.

When I consider the daie and houre of the generall iudgement, my bones doo shake for feare, because entreatie then shall not turne awaie the wrath of God, but hee will be a righteous iudge to all.

Act. 10, 42

2. Tim. 4, 8

Hebr. 12, 23

O God most holie, mightie, and mercifull Sauour, saue mee from that bitter death, and give mee grace to repent, that I may vnfeinedlie bewaile my sinnes before I departe out of this present world.

(?)

CHAP.

CHAP. 3.

1. An humble confession of sins ;
2. with a Praier for grace
to repent.



*Y sorowe is euer
before mee ^a.*

^a Psa. 38, 17

O my God, foulie
haue I sported my life
with manifold sinnes:
but, Lord, behold my teares which
I shead before thee, because I haue
so much offended thine holines.

For I know that in mee, that is, in
my flesh, dwelleth no good thing ^b; ^b Rom. 7, 18
and that so long as I carrie about a
mortall bodie, I am not free from
wickednes ^c.

^c Wisd. 9, 15

I therefore doo sinne, and offend
daie by daie; and, which is more la-
mentable, I suffer manie sinnes to
passe awaie without sorow and due
repentance.

For being busie most commonlie,
and encombred with affaires of the
world and vane curiousnes, I am not
able so speedilie to returne vnto
wholesome teares. Whereof it is that
the darkenes of sinne doth encrease
10

The fourth booke

so mightelie against mee, the which
both stop vp the fountaines of grace,
& hinder the streames of heaucnlie
comfort from comming vnto mee.

L O R D. And is that a small of-
fence?

S O V L E. No, my God, it is a great
finne, and so much the greater, as it
passeth the sooner from the heart,
and doth not prick mee with sor-
rowe.

But, Lord, wilt thou not regard
this my wicked dealing? How long
shall I delude thee, and thus deceiue
my selfe!

Wilt thou alwaie be silent? where
is thy rod? where is thy spur? where
is thy wand?

O Lorde, why doost thou with-
drawe thy iudgement, and the paines
of hell from mine eies?

Were these things alwaies in my
remembrance, could I bee so retch-
lesse?

Thy silence and patience is for
mine amendment^d; but if I still bee
negligent, wilt thou not then punish
mee seuerelie^e? Surelie thou wilt
punish mee, if not in this world, yet
in the world to come.

For nothing shall passe awaie vn-
reuenged,

^d Wis. 11, 20

^e 2. Pet. 3, 9

^e Wis. 12, 10

of the Imitation of Christ.

reuenged, neither small, neither great offence.

But much better heere in this world, where both weeping is profitable, the paine is short, the satisfaction more accepted, and reconciliation sooner had.

And therefore spare not the rod; but with a sharpe water annoint mine eies, and reserve not my sinnes vntill the time to come, least then I bee deliuered vnto the tormenters vntill I haue paid the vtmost farthing f.

f Matt. 5, 26

Better is it nowe a little for my profit to be pricked, than hereafter to feele the bitter paines of hell fire.

Purgatory.

Wherefore I am to mourne, and to conceaue a great sorowe for my sinnes.

For manie things I haue to bewaile, but no cause at all to laugh.

The darkenesse of mine hart, the slipperines of my conscience; my proaness vnto wickednes; my want of grace, doo with mee, yea rather of necessitie doo enforce mee to weepe and to lament.

Furthermore, the remembrance of manifold temptations, and of assaults

The fourth booke

faults to sinne, should make me haue
little lust to be merrie.

Spare mee, o Lord, spare mee.

For though I weepe, beeing touched inwardlie with sorow, it is no maruell, because the time is now to weepe.

O happie is the houre, when I conceaue sorow for my finnes! Blessed are the teares which doo flowe from the griefe of heart, at the consideration of the foulness of a guiltie conscience!

And who is able to sound the bottom of this depth, and to reprocue the hidden filthines without feeling?

John. 1, 9 O my God, the true light, thou canst lighten all the obscure places of mine heart; yea, and burne vp all the spots thereof, in the spirit of heate, and iudgement.

Psal. 51, 10 It is in thee to giue a newe heart, to create a new spirit, and there to prepare a secret habitation, that it may bee a place for thee to rest in, and a tabernacle of thy name, which art the louer of cleanes, and the ghest of the good conscience.

But forsomuch as willinglie thou doost not visit a disordered house,
but

of the Imitation of Christ.

but commonlie leapest the same to
bee illuded with beastlie affections,
I am the more carefull least that be-
tide mee.

But helpe mee, o mercifull and
gracious God, to repare the ruins of
this mine house.

Woe to him from whome thou
departest awaie offended! But
peace to him vnto whome thou des-
cendest, and with whome thou a-
bidest.

I miserable wretch now placed
in the middes of snares, and loaden
with the shacles of wickednes, what
counsell is best for mee, or what re-
medie to be vsed, but onelie to lift vp
mine heauie cies vnto thee, that
my crie may be heard in the hea-
uens?

For a polluted conscience shall
neuer finde or haue a better medi-
cine, than bitterlie to flae it selfe in
praier. And how can extreeme ten-
tation more profitablie bee cured
that it preuaile not, than by pow-
ring continuall petitions vnto thee,
and by humbling our selues?

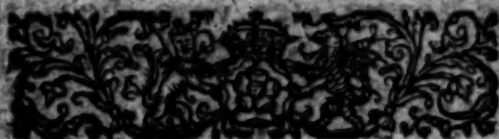
But who can giue mee these bles-
sings? I meane to praie and to weepe
as I ought to doe. Where may I
attaine

The fourth booke

attaine that humilitie, and abundance of teares: Doubtlesse of thee
 1 Psal. 130, 7 Lord, with whome is mercieⁱ, and great redemption.

O Lord, my God, the giuer of all
 1 Lam. 1, 17 grace^k, grant that I maie, as I am bound, bewaile mine offenses, seeme they neuer so small, and to amend all without vaine excuses, aswell those offences which are secret, as those that are well knowen.

Let this mine hartie repentance
 get mee thy fauor againe, and
 prepare vnto well doing,
 and to that which
 tendeth vnto
 saluation.



CHAP.

of the Imitation of Christ.

CHAP. 4.

I. A lamentation of the soule for her
 weaknesse, and unstaiednes in the
 race of virtue.



Hine eies did see

mee, when I was without
forme.

Psalm 139, 16

O Lord my GOD,
 what in the ende will

become of mee, seeing dailie I doo
 offend?

When shall I amend my life as I
 ought to doo? When will it be bet-
 ter with mee? When shall I waxe
 strong? And when shall I ouer-
 come?

I am cast head-long into the deep
 pit of filthines. Who can thinke
 there is yet hope left to arise againe,
 to amend, to goe forward, and to
 come vnto the ende? Surelie tou-
 ching my selfe I am out of all hope;
 ah that mine hope were stronger in
 thee!

I greatlie doo despeire, because
 my weakenes encreaseth through
 long troubles; and I see no ende of
 my sorow, and sinne.

C I

And

The fourth booke

And though I saie, lo nowe I will
begin to amend; lo it is nowe time,
I will doo my best to reforme my
selfe; straight-waie, alas, sinne standeth
before mee; the enimie listeth
vp himselfe against mee, and wicked
custome keepeth mee back with
might and maine, contrarie to my
minde.

O Lord, behold howe I am cast
downe, and troden vnder foote: be-
hold the troubles which I doo en-
dure.

Lift vp thy right hand, and deli-
uer mee fro my persecutors; for they
b Psal. 142, 6 are too strong for mee.

My wisdom is perished, and my
strength hath failed mee.

Mine arme is broken, neither can
c Psal. 44, 6 my sword saue mee.

I see not vnto whome I may flie;
and that will receaue and heale me,
I knowe none.

Thou alone continuest my refuge;
but I dare not approach for shame,
because I haue offended thee.

I haue sinned, o God, forgieue mee.
I am sorie, yea hartelie sorie that e-
uer I did transgresse thy lawes.

Giue mee that which seemeth
right in thine eyes, and bee merci-
full.

of the Imitation of Christ.

full.

Thou didest iustlie in forsaking mee; and iustlie thou didest commit mee into the hands of mine aduersarie.

But Lord, remember that which thou hast made, amende that which is decaied, for of it selfe it can neuer stande.

Marke my groaning, and my troubles: let the paine and grieve of mine heart at no time be out of thy remembrance.

O mercifull Father, cast an eie vpon my thraldome and imprisonment, vpon the miserie and crueltie which I doo endure; and bring mee out that am bound, from the prison-house, and wretched bondage.

Though a man should liue manie yeares, what will hee bee the better thereby? And who knoweth whether hee shall amend his wicked life, or be worse and worse?

Man woteth not howe hee shall proccede, and ende; and his continuance is verie doubtfull, because of the manifold chances of euils, and dangerous tentations.

Manie at their first conuersion from sinne are good and humble,
which

The fourth booke

which afterward become froward and rebellious. At the first they were modest and deuoute, zelous and silent, and in the ende prooued carelesse, and dissolute, bablers, and barbarous. And they which at the beginning did bridle their wicked affections, at the length had scarce anie care at all either what they said or did. And so by little and little wickednesse taketh roote and encreaseth while it is not prevented at the beginning.

Who therefore but should feare, and be circumspect, seeing such vnluckie chances doo come vnto the good and modest?

Againe, who thoroughlie doth knowe whether hee bee elected; or hath strength to beare all things?

Act. 14, 22 Wee are all to be tried, and who is sure that hee shall not be burned,

1. Pet. 1, 7 seeing tentation is a fire?

So that all must feare, and hope alike of the better: but none is rashlie to presume, nor yet prowdlie to bee secure.

Prou. 17, 3 In deed the gold which is tried, shall be preserued: but I aduise thee, O man, to consider well of what metall thou art.

The

of the Imitation of Christ.

The celestiaall purger will purge,
hee will fine the sonnes of Leui⁸, ^{8 Mal. 3, 3}
euen all that are his seruants^h. ^{h 2. Tim. 3,}

It is not alwaies gold, which hath ^{verse 12}
the color of gold; neither is it al-
waie stuble, or naughtie siluer, which
endureth beating, and beareth the
flaile. For God beholdeth the verie
cogitations and the heartsⁱ, by them ^{i Psalm. 7, 9}
most commonlie working woonders,
which in the opinion of manie are
but castawaies.

O Lord God, what ioie can I haue
in this world, when I thinke vpon the
vncertaintie^k, and frailtie of all ^{k 2. Petr. 3, 7}
things vnder heauen? ^{Psal. 102, 25}

Notwithstanding, this am I sure
of, that thou art good, and that thy
mercie is from generation to gene-
ration on them that feare thee^l. ^{l Luk. 1, 50}

For thine infinite goodnes and
mercie, is greater than all my
sins. And this shall be my
comfort, while thou
giuest me space to
amend my
life.

The fourth booke

CHAP. 5.

1. Of the shortnes and miserie of
this present life. 2. A praier for
grace to renounce the world,
and the vanities of the
same.



Et mee vnderstand
the shortnes of my
daies. So long as I am
in this world, I am wic-
ked^a: and while I con-
tinue vpon the earth, I am poore, a
stranger, and a pilgrime^b.
I brought nothing into the world^c,
and certaine it is I can carrie no-
thing thereout: for naked came I
out of my mothers wombe^d, and
naked shall I retorne thither a-
gaine.

As a shadow which passeth awaie;
and as a fether, which is tossed vp
and downe with the winde; and as
a ghest of one night, so suddenlie
shall I passe awaie.

All the time wee haue heere to
liue, is but as the shortest night.
Fewe and euill are my daies^e, and
after a little while they shall ende,
and bee as though they had neuer
been

^a Iob. 14, 4

^b Heb. 11, 13

^c 1. Tim. 6, 7

^d Iob. 1, 21

^e Gen. 47, 9

of the Imitation of Christ.

been.

And when man is dead, what is in man but filthines? Who will haue anie care of a stinking carcas? Or who will enquire of the absent being dead, whereas beeing alieue hee was accounted off.

A small while is man remembered either of his freends, or of strangers: but vndoubtedlie the righteous shall be had in euerlasting remembrance, because hee shall be euerlastinglie linked to God, who is alwaies the same, and shall neuer die.

Therefore happie is hee which putteth no trust in man; nor yet reioiceth in anie worldlie thing, but hath his hart fixed in heaven, for what soeuer is in this world, is transitorie and vane.

Call into thy minde those which haue liued since the world began vntill now, and tell, I praie thee, where they bee? And those whome you see and heare to liue now, how long thinkest thou will they endure?

Saie therefore of all, Euerie man that liueth, is but vanitie.

O miserable and wretched life!

Psal. 112, 6

Ps. 101, 27

Psal. 2, 12

1. Petr. 3, 7

Psal. 102, 25

26

1. Cor. 7, 31

1. Iohn 3, 17

Psal. 39, 5

The fourth booke

O fraile, and lamentable life, which good men doo suffer rather than desire: and wicked men, albe they desire it, yet can they not long enioie the same!

Oah, vanitie of this world, when wilt thou haue an ende? when wilt thou cesse?

Yet the time will come, when all the elect shall be set free from the bondage of corruption¹, though now they doo lament, because they are estranged from the kingdome of

¹Rom. 8, 22 ²Christ

Would to God, the whole world would euen wither vp in mine hart; and my Lord God, euen mine immortall spouse, seeme sweete vnto my soule!

Vndoubtedlie, the fleeting ioie of this present life, is but a false and a most bitter potion. Let them drinke thereof that list, for afterward they shall feelee a most bitter flixe. And the more one hath drunke thereof, the sharper shall his torments bee, because the whole pleasure of this world shall more speedelie passe awaye than the winde², and leaue to their louers paines and burnings³.

²Wisd. 5, 8

³Luk. 16, 25

Therefore out of my sight, thou decept-

of the Imitation of Christ.

deceiptfull glorie of the world, and
all foolish pleasure of the flesh.

Manie you doo drawe, and de-
ceiue: but in the ende you leaue and
destroie them.

P. I. Ioh. 2, 15

Woe to them which belecue thee;
woe to them which be there draw-
ned.

16

17

But come, and come nigh mee,
most holie humilitie; and the full
renouncing of all worldlie pompes;
and neuer doo thou leaue mee, O
thou sweete remembrance of my
present pilgrimage.

What am I but ashes, and earth?
and whether tende I, but towards
earth?

1 Ecclus. 10

verse 9

1 Gen. 3, 19

Oah, how wretched am I become!
how iustlie maie I lament, when I
thinke vpon my pilgrimage; and
how little I am priue how I shall
ende the same!

1 Heb. 11, 13

If I liue well, and continue so,
there is no cause whie I should feare
an euill death. But who can glorie
of a good life, and of a pure consci-
ence? Hee which knoweth himselte
to be such a one, let him reioice in
the Lord, and take compassion vpon
mee a sinner.

1. Cor. 1, 31

To liue I haue no desire, because

1 Phil. 1, 23

miserie

The fourth booke

miserie enuironeth mee on euerie
side: to die an euill conscience is
affraide, for to answere God, it hath
not one for a thousand.

* Iob. 9, 3

The Prophet was not so in a feare,
7 Psal. 102, 1 which said y, *Mine heart is prepared,*
o God, mine heart is prepared.

O Lord, the God of my saluation,
let my life come vnto a good ende;
and prolong not the daies of my la-
mentation. With sorowe I came into
this prison; and without griefe I shall
not get out.

S, Long doo I thinke this life; and
the rather, because of the continuall
miserie and troubles which I finde
therein; but in truth it is not long,
for it passeth awaie more swiftilie

* Iob. 9, 25

than a Poste.

To a man that liueth in paine and
miserie, all time is long, and hee

* Eccles. 41,

compreth a daie for a yeere. This
maketh my life tedious vnto mee,
and so much the more it dooth
trouble mee, as the more trulle
consider all the miseries of the
same.

But, if happellie anie consolations
and loie come betweene, it standeth
mee vpon to looke about whether
they bee of God, or no. If they bee

of the Imitation of Christ.

of God, I accept them gladlie, but yet I knowe not how long they will continue: yet howe shorte soeuer they bee, they like and please mee well.

But, would to God hee would powre them largelie vpon mee; and cause them to continue with mee a long while!

But the ioies and pleasures which are not of God, are vile and vading, albe to the shewe they appeare sweete and pleasant.

Thus, euen thus passeth awaie this life, replenished continuallie both with good and euill things.

Therefore so long as I liue in this world, I am a poore pilgrime ^b.

^b Heb. 11, 13

I cannot trulie saie I haue enough, because presentlie there is satietie of no good thing ^c: but the good thing which I looke for thou art ^d, in whome I beleeeue.

^c Eccles. 1, 8

^d Ps. 119, 57

So that, when thy glorie hath appeared, and replenished mee, then, euen then I will acknowledge, that I haue enough. But in the meane while, because this word is hidden fro mee, much grieve and sorowe dooth enuiron my soule.

And therefore beeing mindfull
of

The fourth booke

of thine holie saieng, I repeate this
 *Matth. 26, often-times e, My soule is verie hea-
 verse 38. uie, euen vnto the death.

Well were it with mee, if this
 houre were come, and that nei-
 ther grieve nor sorowe did possesse
 mee!

But, Lord, I beseech thee, let thy
 goodnes conserue mee.



CHAP.

CHAP. 6.

1. An ardent desire of the soule to
bee loosed from sinne, and from
the troubles of this
world.



Ring my soule out
of prison^a.

^a Psal. 143. 7

The greatnes of my
sorowe will not suffer
mee to bee still.

For whie doo I yet liue in this
world? I knowe not what I can doe
heere.

Slowlie, God hee knoweth, I go
forward in virtue; naie would to
God I went not backward!

O Lord, what a pleasure shouldest
thou doo mee, if speedelie thou
wouldest take mee out of this life,
that a woorser thing come not vnto
mee^b.

^b Iohn. 5. 14

My life, alas, figheth in paine,
and in weldoing amendeth not.

If thou looke for my conuersion, I
repent not by the same, but doo a-
buse thy long suffering; if thou pu-
nish mee, I doo hardlie show pati-
ence, because thou pursuest drie
stubble.

• Iob. 13, 25 stuble c.

Whie then doost thou not quite take awaie thy seruant? Whie doo I liue vpon the earth? that is, whie doo I dwell among good people, and yet reforme not my life and manners? Whie, so vnwoorthelie and dangerousslie keepe I the place of some better person, and yet walke so careleslie and so coldlie, in this life?

Thus powre I out this wofull thing which I consider of, in the eares of my God.

Yet, gracious Lord, crie not out in thine anger against me, *Cut downe the tree* d, and cast it into the fire.

• Luk. 13, 7 I accuse mine infirmitie before thee, that I maie finde grace in thy sight through my confession.

It is my part to accuse; but it belongeth vnto thee to show mercie c. It is my part to weepe and to sigh bitterlie; but it belongeth vnto thee Lord, mercifullie to comfort.

Wherefore, my Lord and God, either giue mee more grace in this life, or take me speedelie out of this world, that the rent bee not worser.

For to liue long, and not to cesse from

of the Imitation of Christ.

from ill living, is but to augment the punishment of hell.

Neither can I awake with such a life as knoweth neither how to proceede in virtue, nor to bewaile wickednes.

For that partie which leadeth an holie and righteous life, is greued at the heart whensoever hee offendeth; and that he maie in grace and virtue encrease more and more, it is alwaies his desire.

What shall hee doo which knoweth himselfe dailie to offend; and that his flesh greivouslie dooth rise against the spirit? who also beeing overcome with tediousnes sometime; and cooled with negligence and idlenesse, dooth giue over to resist, or else laie aside the spirituall weapons; dooth follow the swing of the flesh, whether his owne wil dooth drawe him.

Ephes. 6.

Alas, Lord and God, such a one alas draweth nigh vnto the gates of death; and living in the flesh, runneth into the death of the soule.

Osh, how is euerie one to take heede, that hee bee not seduced and supplanted of the enimie.

1. Pet. 5.

No man is sure from temptation,

Matt. 6.

no

The fourth booke

1 Iob 14, 4 no man is pure from sinneⁱ; but all
 Psalm 51, 5 the sort of vs are fraile^k.

7 But, Lord, thou which art almighty^l,
 k Iam. 3, 2 tie^l, and knowest all things^m, raise
 1 Iob. 13, 3 y^p the broken in heart; and cleanse
 m Eccles. 23 verse 19 the vncleane from all filthines, re-
 Est. 13, 12 nue a new spirit within his bowels,
 that all faintnes and lazenes may
 leaue him, that spirituall zeale may
 returne, and that thy loue may con-
 tinue vnmoueable within him vnto
 the ende.

For he onlie wanteth thine affi-
 stance, who is peised downe with his
 owne waightⁿ: neither is hee able
 to cast off the load of sinne, vntill
 thou sende strength from heauen of
 power to loase the hard fetters of
 carnall affections.

And this my request is to obtaine;
 for without thy speciall grace, wee
 shall neither leade a good life in this
 world, nor liue eternallie in the life

to come^o.

And whereas I now liue in the bo-
 die, it is no ioie to mee; for better it
 were for mee to die, than to liue^p:
 because through this life I am de-
 barred the farder from eternall life,
 which cannot come, vnlesse that
 death doo destroye the life present,

on

yea

of the Imitation of Christ.

yea and death also it selfe bee destroyed.

Hence it is that my desire is to heauen-ward, and mine heart seeking eternall rest, fetcheth deepe sighes, and crieth:

It is now enough Lord, take awaie my soule, which thou hast redeemed with thy pretious blood 9.

Open to mee the gate of thy kingdom, and let in a poore pilgrime returning vnto thee from exile.

Listen to mee, Lord, and loose me from the band of the bodie 1.

What should I longer doo heere? I am good neither to my selfe, nor to others.

Whie then doo I liue? To my selfe I am burdensome, to others troublesome.

What shall become of mee? I wot not, Lord, whether thou hast fore-seene anie better thing of me, wherefore my longing should bee lingred.

I doo allow thine ordinance, because it is good; but in mee onlie I finde the euill, whie it greeueth and troubleth mee to liue in the world.

For dailie I doo sinne; I heape sinne vpon sinne, and yet, as I ought,

91. Pet. 1, 18

19

1 Heb. 11, 13

1 Phil. 1, 23

The fourth booke

I repent not.

If therefore I were loosed from
 Rom. 6, 6 this bodie of sinne, and coupled to
 thee in heauen, neither should I of-
 fendanie more, nor thou bee offen-
 ded, but be praised continuallie.

Notwithstanding as yet thou bea-
 rest with mee, and showest all pa-
 2. Petr. 3, 9 tience.

I know my fault; because through
 my sinnes I maie not enter into thy
 kingdome. For none vncleane thing
 Ephes. 5, 5 shall enter thereinto.

But, when shall I be without sinne/
 Reuel. 22, 15 When shall I throughlie be cleansed,
 that I maie not feare to bee prohi-
 bited, but reioice rather to bee let
 in?

If I goe not forward more zea-
 louslie, nor bee more carefull than
 hethereto I haue bin, I am affraide,
 mine hope will be little enough.

But Lord, thou which wilt that
 1. Tim. 2, 4 no man should perish, but that all
 1. Petr. 3, 9 should bee saued, grant mee more
 grace to the amendment of my life;
 and to hope for celestiall blessings;
 giue mee the spirit of inward rat-
 nes.

Let not mine heart heere reioice
 after the flesh; but in fearing let it
 expect

of the Imitation of Christ.

expect for death.

Let no care, or creature hold mee
back; but let thy desired presence
drawe and comfort mee.

Blessed is the man which trusteth
in thee, o Lord 2; but more blessed

2 Psal. 37, 34

is hee that is passed out of this

Psal. 27, 14

wicked world, for he shall

no more either feelee,

or feare any

trouble

2 Reue. 7, 17

Reue. 21, 4



CHAP.

The fourth booke

CHAP. 7.

I. A godlie desire for a good death.

a Psal. 71, 5



Lord, thou art mine
hope euen from my youth ^a.

In this hope I flie
vnto thee, vntill the
last houre and time of
my resolution shall come.

Oah that I were so well prepared,
that I might euen now die vnder the
hope of grace!

Oah that I had ended this life
with an happie departure; and laide
^b Wisd. 9, 15 off the loade of this bodie ^b; how
manie dangers and feares had I then
escaped!

Happie is the man whome thou
hast chosen, and taken vp, who is
now gone out of this world vnto the
^c Mat. 5, 48 father ^c; from banishment, vnto a
^d Mat. 25, 34 kingdome ^d; from the prison vnto
^e Phil. 1, 23 the palace ^e; from darkenes vnto
^f Reue. 22, 5 light ^f; from death vnto life ^g; vn-
^g Reue. 21, 4 to securitie from dangers ^h; from
^h Reue. 7, 16 labor vnto rest ⁱ; and from all man-
¹⁷ ner miseries vnto euerlasting feli-
ⁱ Reu. 14, 23 citie ^k!
^k Reu. 22, 5

Happie is the soule that now en-
ioieth

of the Imitation of Christ.

ioieth her reward, triumphing in thee her Lord!

But, alas that my contric is so long kept fro mee!

1 Psal. 130, 5

How gratiouſſie and mercifullie ſhouldeſt thou deal with mee, if quicklie I were called awaie, and bidden to come vnto thee, that where thou art, I might be alſo!

Oah that I had bin taken out of this world, before euer I had knowen the filthines of the ſame, and before I was affraide to offend euen in ſmall things; how happie then had I bin! But now the longer heere I liue, the more I wander from thee, and doo ſinne in too too manie things.

Wo is mee, what haue I doone? Alas, I haue ſolowed the deſires of the fleſh, and haue drawn vanitie to my ſelfe with roapes, but godlines I haue abandoned, abhorred innocencie, and added ſinne vnto ſinne, ſo that now to my grieve I finde that true which I haue ſometime read,

= Iſai. 3, 11

Woe be to the wicked, it ſhall be euill with him.

Too too late almoſt I haue returned vnto my God, yea verie late it was eare I began to amend, and then

The fourth booke

too but slowlie went I on; I was not zealous enough in my proceeding, I did not encrease in zeale, but, which is woorser, I waxed cooler and cooler.

Hence it was that manie times I was yerie loath to die, because my guiltie conscience still tolde mee I had not liued as I should haue doone.

Notwithstanding, in consideration of the dangerous temptations (wherevnto I am subiect) and that my finnes might not encrease, manie a time haue I wished for death; and into these woordes haue I burst, saying:

Oah that now God in mercie would take mee out of this world, that I might sinne no more vpon learch! Oh that God speedelic would vouchsafe to take mee awaie; and make an ende of my labors; in what an happy state should I then bee!

But, Lord, all things must bee euen as thou wilt. If thou minde to doo that which I require, it shall forth-with bee accomplished: but if otherwise, thy will bee doon.

I make vtter out my desire; and the miserie which I endure, not as

of the Imitation of Christ.

to him which is ignorant thereof,
but that thereby I may finde some
comfort to my soule.

I knowe I am not yet readie as I
ought to bee; for my conscience is
greatlie out of quiet.

And what maruell though I, a
sinner, doo stand in feare, seeing ma-
nie euen of the holie fathers were
affraide, because thou iudgest not
as man dooth.

But how shall I prepare my selfe?
It were good for mee to prepare my
selfe against that time, which may
come this daie before to morow for
anie thing I knowe.

Therefore I will more firmelie al-
ter my purpose; I will bewaile all my
negligences passed; I will sacrifice
my selfe to thee; and wholie and
henceforth commend my selfe vnto
thy mercie, o Lord.

O Lord, my God, all my works doo
stand at thy mercie; and without
thy mercie I haue no merits. And
this is mine hope, this is all my
trust.

But how fareth it with a good and
pure conscience? What saith the
chaste, and deuoute soule? Come,
saith she, Lord Iesus, o come, and
tarie

1. Sam. 16.

Iohn. 8, 12

Ephes. 1, 6

P Reu. 22, 30

The fourth booke

tarie not; vntie my finnes, loase my
fettters, bring me out of prison, out of
the lake of miserie, and mirie claie.

¶ 1 Psal. 40, 2 I haue waited patientlie for thee,
1 2 O Lord, incline to mee, and heare my
crie. Leaue mee not anie longer in
this wicked world.

Let it content thee that heretofore
I haue striuen, that so long I haue
bin in exile; that I haue not deser-
ued to enioie thee, nor to see thee
face to face.

¶ 1. Cor. 13, 12 Grant mee to enioie the long de-
verse 12 fired ioie, which no time shall ende,
¶ Reuel. 21, 4 nor troubles ouershadowe.

Show mee thy countenance, which
the angels continuallie do behold.

¶ 1 Mar. 18, 10 Let thy voice bee heard in mine
eares, which they without cessing
doe heare.

Come Lord Iesu, and take mee
out of this forreine contrie; call mee
wretch home vnto my contrie; and
¶ Heb. 11, 10 restore mee a sinner vnto my former
13 puritie.

¶ Matt. 1, 21 Come gracious Redeemer, make
mee partaker of thine eternall glo-
rie.

It is hie time that I returne vnto
thee; it is now time that I commend
my bodie to the earth, whereout it
was

of the Imitation of Christ.

was taken ².

² Gene. 2, 7.

The matter is not great where the bodie be laide, or how it be handled, if so be the soule be safe, and come vnto thee.

Let my spirit doo well, which I commend into thine hands; and let my flesh rest in hope to be raised vp againe in the last daie ⁷. For where-
⁷ better it be buried, it can neuer bee
⁷ far, or hid from thee.

⁷ 1. Cor. 15,

verse 51

52

53

Remooue mee from the compa-
 nie of men, and ioine mee to the so-
 cietie of thy saints. For this tempo-
 rall life is irkesome to mee: but to
 thinke of the daie of eternall glorie,
 reioiceth mine heart.

Oah, let not the olde serpent ²
 withstand mee at my departure out
 of Aegypt; let not the enimie barke
 against mee in the gate: let neither
 Satan with his ouglie sight terrefie,
 nor the horror of death trooble mee:
 but let thine holie angels faithfullie
 assist, stoutlie aide, valiantlie pro-
 tect, louinglie receiue, and ioyefullie
 bring mee vnto the everlasting feli-
 citie of thy celestiall paradise.

² Reue. 12, 9

And mercifull, louelie, and bles-
 sed Iesu, doo thou gratiousslie, I be-
 seech thee, behold mee; and cast

D I

mee

The fourth booke

mee not out of the number of thy
seruants : but remember, o Sonne
of God, how thou hast redeemed
mee with thy pretious blood ².

¹ Epheſ. 1, 3

⁷ Receaue mee into glorie, and that
¹ Pet. 1, 18 in thy mercie and goodnes: because
¹⁹ greatlie haue I wished to solemnize
a passeouer with thee.

Oah happie daie of my desired re-
ward! Come blessed houre of bles-
sed passage, which long I haue desi-
red, and kept before mine eies.

¹ Rom. 8, 18

What now haue the troobles and
afflictions in the world hurt mee? ^b
What am I the woorsse for the con-
tempt, labor, and humiliation for thy
name sake?

¹ Phil. 1, 24

Thou hast bin my life, and now
death will be to me an aduantage ^c,
and to be with thee in thy kingdome
will be absolute felicitie.

¹ Joh. 11, 25

¹ A.C. 2, 26

Now praise and glorie be to thee,
who art the life, of such as liue ^d, the
hope, of those which die ^e, the
saluation and rest of all
which trust in
thee ^f.

¹ Psal. 17, 7

¹ Psalm. 34, 8

¹ Prou. 16, 20

CHAP.

of the Imitation of Christ.

CHAP. 8.

A meditation of one dead vnto
the world, yet alive in
Christ.



Torne awaie mine

oies from regarding vani- a Psa. 119. 37

tie a.

Oah Iesu, which art
the true life ^b, which ^bIoh. 11. 9

neuer shall haue an ende, geue mee
grace that through loue of thee I
may bee consumed, through loue
wounded, through loue killed, that
the flesh preuaile not ouer mee.

I am not as yet thoroughlie dead
to the world, but the old man yet
liueth in mee ^c, raising vp within me ^cRom. 7. 3
much contention, and desires of ma-
nifold euils, and making the nightes
bitter, and the daies tedious vnto
mee.

Oah, when will it fall out, that
boldlie I may saie, I thought my selfe
as a dead man: For hee which dead
is, doth waie neither the praises of
men, nor the reproches of the ma-
lignant, because he is dead.

Hee which touching the flesh is
dead,

The fourth booke

dead, neither speaketh, nor smell-
 leth, nor tasteth, nor exerciseth anie
 worke, yea he neither heareth also
 the vanitie of this world: againe he
 regardeth not curious and bewti-
 full things enticing vnto the loue of
 some vile thing vpon earth.

And hee which is dead to the
 world, is not in the world, but in
 God to whome hee liueth; euen as
 Paule to the beloued disciples doth
 Col. 3, 3. saie ^d, yee are dead, and your life is hid
 with Christ in God.

This man doth so speake, so thinke,
 so behold things without, as though
 they were not. For the things which
 1. Ioh. 2, 17 are seene, are temporall, and vane ^e:
 but the things which are not seene,
 2. Cor. 4, 18 are eternall ^f.

Hether doth hee cast his eie; he-
 ther doth hee hasten; hether is his
 desire; for these things doth hee la-
 bor, to attaine these things is all his
 3 Col. 3, 1 studie ^g.

These things hee wisheth, these
 things hee loueth, these things hee
 seeketh, these things hee sauoreth,
 euen which are within, and secret;
 to wit, great good things, soueraigne,
 and eternall things, of which hee
 cannot thinke too often, because
 theie

of the Imitation of Christ.

these are exceeding pretious, and sweete, and delectable, and more than vtterable ^b.

^b 1. Cor. 2, 9

This man is far estranged from present things ⁱ, and breatheth altogether after things eternall ^k, ha-
uing the dominion ouer the sensuall appetite.

ⁱ Gal. 6, 14

^k Colos. 3, 2

For the flesh seeketh outward, desireth pleasant, loueth present, loatheth absent, flieth all sharp and bitter things, which notwithstanding are good for the soule ^l. Whence it commeth that it will not suffer the spirit to be at rest, but laieth before it sundrie phantasies, which are scarce to be spoken, and in truth not to be accompted of.

^l Rom. 8, 4
5, &c.

But hee which is endued with the grace of spirituall fortitude, maie with more ease subdue the insolent motions of the flesh, singing in the word of the diuine power ^m, *The Lord is with mee, therefore I will not feare what flesh can doe vnto mee.*

^m Psal. 118, 6

Therefore albeit this sensualitie doth moue battell, and the voice of the flesh doth secretlie murmur ⁿ: yet doth not the spirituall man easilie consent; for greater is the force of the diuine loue which inwardlie

ⁿ Rom. 8, 11

The fourth booke

doth comfort.

This man now and then so sweetlie, so stronglie, and so earnestlie is drawen, rauished, and in loue with God, that scarfeliē hee doth see, and perceauē the things about him, and be heard in the world: because he is **Math. 6, 31** not there, but else-where *; not belowe, but aloft euen with God, and in God, which moueth the spirit within him, and erecteth, and as it were carrieth it awaie in a fire chariot, that at the length it maie enioie him in an happie, and holie, and long wished desire of his hart.

This man is sildome found (idle) abroade, because his freende hath borne him awaie. There quietlie and alone hee heareth his speech, euen the speech of his beloued, and greatlie doth reioice to heare the voice of his vn suspected spouse.

Neither straight-waie doth he cast his phiall vpon the ground to drawe vp vanitie: but hideth the founde treasure, and shutteth it vnder locke and keie, that the foote of pride come not in, and so all virtue doo perish. **1 Sal. 8, 8** For thus he saith to him *Set mee a seale on thine heart,* and so forth as it followeth in that place.

of the Imitation of Christ.

It is good to seale the heart, and to keepe it, least the beloued goe back, and flie awaie: because hee seeketh and visitet aboute all a pure and an humble heart.

¶ Math. 5, 8

Math. 11, 29

These things hee thinketh with himselfe, and is astonished at that good thing which passeth all sense, and gifts. Yea still hee wandereth, and enquireth diligētlie, what thing is this? and exceedingly reioiceth, for that Manna is come downe from heauen.

And hee which ministrereth true bread from heauen, doth giue also a good vnderstanding to the taster, that hee maie knowe, how euerie good giuing, and euerie gift is from aboue, and commeth downe from the father of lightes.

¶ Iohn. 6, 31

33

¶ Iam. 1, 17

This word now, saith hee, is from God. Without him there is nothing, I haue all things from him.

¶ Iohn. 1, 3

Furthermore (this spirituall man) hee woondereth, and lamenteth that hee so lightlie esteemeth so excellent a good thing, by the which hee is not a little blessed; and whie also he dooth not oftener bend his heart to heare and to see that, than the which nothing is more sweete, and

1
2
3
4
5

The fourth booke

bleffed to be desired.

And would to God hence-forth I might thus doo ! For this exceedingly dooth delight mee, and more will delight mee, the more I giue my selfe vnto these meditations.

Oah that my beloued would come into mine heart, that I might taste the sweetnes of his apples !

Oah that hee would decline vnto mee, and shoue himselfe to mee, and mee to himselfe ! Hee is my felicitie, and mine onlie delight.

Now begin I to couet, and desire, and greatlie to loue this good thing, in whome all good things are ; this ioie, in whome is all ioie ; this one thing, in whome are all things, small and great, base and hie ; yet nothing created, but without all conceipt of man, the beginning and the ende of all the good things which hee hath formed.

Reuel. 1, 8

Hence it is that now and then I would thoroughlie bee replenished with this good thing, and filled with that so heauenlie ioie ; and I couet after a sort euen to be swallowed vp and consumed vtterlie of him, that mine insatiable desire might once be satisfied, in such sort, that nothing in mee

of the Imitation of Christ.

mee might bee mine, but his onlie,
whose the fire and heate of loue is,
whose this wonderfull worke is also,
that so I might the more greedilie
be carried to him ward, and be made
one spirit together with him.

Notwithstanding all this doth not
puffe vp the godlie man, or make
him to thinke himselfe some-what;
or to despise others, or to iudge infe-
riors; for hee knoweth that whatso-
euer hee hath cometh not of him-
selfe, but it is the free gift of God, 1. Cor. 4. 7
that thereby hee is not to waxe
proude, when hee perceaueth him-
selfe to be so comforted of the Lord.

For hee seeketh not the praise of
man, he careth not for foraine fauor,
but hee seeketh the beloued, his
praise, and his fauor hee onlie desi-
reth, in whome hee hath all things,
and shall finde more than all these
things: because hee preferreth his
loue, his sweetenes, and the ioiefull
enioieng of him before all transitorie
things; and his honor hee seeketh
and sigheth for aboue all things else.
And therefore he cannot be proude,
nor boast of anie thing.

(God) hee is his glorie, his praise,
and his comfort. (God euen) hee 1. Cor. 1. 3

The more godlie, the
more humble.

58

Chap. 8.

The fourth booke

is his true and perfect ioie, his soue-
raigne and sole happines, all his de-
sire and perfection. And which more
is, hee would haue others also thus
to reioice with him, and to enioie
such felicitie without ende both in
this world, and in heaven too.

For this is his desire and praier,
that God would reueale himselfe to
all men, and that hee would vouch-
safe to conuert and drawe all vnto
him, that he alone might be praised
and glorified; for hee is both loue
and selfe^a; and such a fountaine of loue,
as neuer can be drawen drie. For hee
dooth more loue all men, than all
men (set together) can loue him.

Notwithstanding it liketh him
well if anie man haue a desire to loue
him from the botome, although hee
cannot sounde vnto the depth.

For hee in louing deuou-
reth, vanquisheth,
and surpasseth
all.



CHAP. 9.

A desire of the Soule, that no
earthlie creature maie carrie
her awaie vnto va-
nicie.



Behold, I would take
my flight far off, and lodge
in the mountaines ^a.

^a Psal. 55. 7

Oah how profitable,
how sweete, and how
ioiesfull a thing is it to sit solitarilie in
silence, to talke with God, and to en-
ioie the onlie good thing, in which
are all good things ^b!

^b Iam. 1. 17

Would to God I were so conioi-
ned to that all simple and onlie good
thing, that I might be moued with
none affections and distractions of
transitorie things; nor curiousellie fa-
sten mine eies vpon anie creature,
and visible thing!

O wretched man that I am, who
shall deliuer from the bodie of this
death ^c?

^c Rom. 7. 24

Alas, how often dieth my soule for
the creatures which she loueth! oah
manie times she forgetteth her crea-
tor, and is carried awaie for their
sakes!

Mine

The fourth booke

Mine vnstable minde now willeth
this thing, now that thing, now it is
heere, now there, seeking but not
finding rest in creatures: because
there is no creature which can yeeld
⁊ Eccles. 1, 8 full sarietie to be enioied^d, though
it hath some delectation for vse.

The heart of man is vnsearchable,
⁊ Hier. 17, 9 and who can knowe it? O Lord,
thou knowest the thoughts of men,
⁊ Psal. 94, 11 that they are vane^e.

O eternall God^s, most hie and
⁊ 1. Tim. 1, infinite^b, the creatorⁱ and gouer-
ner of all things^k, I am thy crea-
ture^l which thou hast made by thy
power.

Thou hast made mee that I should
loue thee, and gladlie would I loue
thee, but I cannot as I would.

For I am fettered with vane loue,
and with clammye affections of tran-
sitorie things, from which, while I
would rid my selfe, hardlie or not at
all can I so doo without great paine.

Oah how soone would theie flie
and perish, if thou, Christ, wert sweet,
and didest sauor in my nostrels!

Notwithstanding sometime through
the sight of the minde I doo behold
thine inuisible things by the crea-

⁊ Rom. 1, 20 tion of the world^m, and thee also the
soue.

of the Imitation of Christ.

soueraigne felicitie, the true and eternall God.

And gladlie would I continue in these meditations, but forthwith I knowe not with what winde I am blowen awaie from them, and helde downe ⁿ like a miser by the loue and waight of visible things. Wisd. 9, 15

Behold, I firmelie doo purpose in mine hart, as it were making a covenant betweene mee and thee, that for thy noble and pretious loue, I will neither loue nor looke vpon a-
nie creature, but will contemne all things, yea my selfe and all mine ^o Rom. 8, 35
but straight-waie worldlie, fleshlie, and familiar cogitations doo ascend into mine heart as though in them were a certaine felicitie, and as though, if I contemned them, I were to forgo some great good thing; and these beare a good countenance, but they hide the wofull ende; showing what is present, but hiding the inconuenience that will ensue, as though euerie-where and in all creatures thou art to be sought, and that nothing were to be neglected or despised, which hath bin made of my God: and thus they withdrawe mee oftentimes fro my purpose, and at
the

The fourth booke

the length vtterlie seduce mee.

Oah how vane, and deceiptfull,
and almost nothing, are thinges
which now stand and flourish, proued
P¹ Ioh. 3, 15 to bee P, which flieng awaie after
16 their sudden ioies, doo leaue mee a-
17 mong the thornes and briars of a
guiltie conscience.

But woe is mee, Lord, yea woe a-
gaine to mee, because so soone I haue
beleueed and assented to vanitie,
and so quicklie forsaken thee, which
9 Iohn. 14, 6 art the truth 9.

Oah, how greatlie haue I sinned
euen in this, that I haue not sticken
18 Luk. 18, 29 to thee alone, neglecting all things
30 else 18

For I was made to loue and to en-
ioie thee, but by following after crea-
tures inordinatelie I haue lost thee,
and found no rest for mine hart in
19 Eccles. 1, 8 them neither 19.

But turne mee vnto thee, O Lord,
and leaue me not in earthlie things,
thou which hast vouchsafed to
promise celestiaall things
to such as folowe
thee 19.

19 Mat. 19, 28

Luke. 9, 23



CHAP. 10.

1. A comparison betweene earthlie,
and heauenlie ioies; 2. with a praiſe
for grace to contemne this
transitorie world.



Y soule hath refu-
sed comfort ^{a.}

^a Psal. 77. 2

Wander thou not af-
ter deceitfull vanities
& madnes, O my soule,

but turne vnto the Lord thy God,
for hee is the fountaine of all com-
fort ^{b.}

^b 2. Cor. 1. 3

Whatsoever thou seekest either
among men, or among creatures,
thou shalt leese it, and shalt well
perceauce it to perish. For though I
graunt, theie maie yeeld some shoue
of comfort, yet sure I am nothing
dooth continue ^{c.}

^c 1. Ioh. 2. 15

Whie so vanelie wilt thou bee de-
ceated? It is egregious follie to beg
of a begger, when he that is rich will

16

17

^d 1. Cor. 7. 15

giue abundantie. Euerie creature is
but poore to minister comfort vnto
vs; but God which is rich in mercie

^d Ephes. 3. 4

^e 1. Tim. 1. 5

giueth to all men liberallie ^{e.}, and
reprocheth no man, if thou for thy
part diligentlie doo seeke ^{f.}, and pa-
tientlie

^f Math. 7. 7

The fourth booke

patientlie expect his leifure.

Returne, o my Soule, returne
 Gen. 8, 2 downe vnto Noah in the arke, euen
 vnto Christ in thine heart, because
 it is not good to abide long abroad.

See thou refuse outward comfort,
 1. Ioh. 2, 15 if inwardlie thou wilt be refreshed.

Doo not thou with the crowe abide
 Gen. 8, 7 without the arke, but with speede
 auoide the carcase. Returne thou an
 hungred, and Christ so will feede

Iohn. 6, 31 thee with the bread of life.

32 If vrgent necessitie, or weakenes

35 hold thee abroad, take heed thou

make no staie, but with speede get
 thee home, least thou be either o-
 uerwhelmed with the flud of words,
 or comprehended in the snares of
 diuelish tentation.

Manie traps are laid for the wan-
 dering soule; and great safetie hath
 the quick returning doone: which
 not finding where to set her foote,
 made haste to come back vnto Noah

Gen. 8, 2 in the ship.

Go thou therefore vnto thy secret
 place and abide there, yea let it bee
 a griefe for thee to bee else where.

Oah blessed is the soule, which
 hath a cleare conscience before God
 Math. 5, 8 and is not delighted with anie

vane

of the Imitation of Christ.

vane thingⁿ, which is neither polluted with louing anie thing^o, nor wearied with extremelie hating a-
 nie man^r *1. Luk. 18, 29*

Blessed is the soule that seeketh no comfort of creatures, but fixeth all her hope in the Lord *30*
• 1. Ioh. 3, 15

Blessed is the soule which refuseth all outward and temporall quietnes, and whatsoeuer belongeth vnto the welfare of the bodie; and which for the loue of Christ dooth willinglie embrace both paine and pouer-
 tie *16*
• Mart. 5, 22
23, &c.
• Psal. 40, 4

Blessed is the soule which com- menderth her selfe to God; that hee maie doo with her euen as hee thin- keth good *• Mat. 19, 29*

Blessed is the soule which at no time seeketh her owne glorie^t, which desireth at no time to haue her owne will doon, but continuallie mindeth, loueth, and preferreth the glorie and will of God aboue all things *• Iere. 9, 24*
1. Cor. 1, 31

Blessed is the soule which dooth estrange her selfe from whatsoeuer is temporall^r, and keepeth her selfe pure and vndefiled before God in all her dealings *• 1. Ioh. 3, 15*
16
• Psal. 13, 1
2

O reioice and be thou much glad, thou which art such a soule; for thou maist

The fourth booke

maist abide in secret and celestiall
(cogitations,) and so magnifie the
Lord daie and night!

Blessed and blessed againe is the
soule whose desires are to heauen.
* Colof. 3, 1 ward *; whose hands and armes are
* out-stretched euen as the two wings
* Eze 11, 22 of the Cherubims 7; whose eies are
* Math. 5, 8 pure to behold God 2; whose inward
power and strength dooth goe alto-
gether, and ascend, and returneth
not, vntill it haue him whome onlie
she loueth before all things! And
when she hath found him, she folo-
weth him whether soeuer hee will
haue her!

And when he speaketh, he reioi-
ceth to heare her make answere, sai-
eng; I am thine onlie beloued, of
theelected. I am thine exceeding
Gen. 15, 1 great reward 1. Bee thou neither
proude in prosperitie, nor impatient
in aduersitie. Consider how theie
which loue mee, are comforted of
mee. How sweetelie, thinkest thou,
I will entreate them, when theie
shall be receaued vnto the eternall
rest, after that the troobles of the
bodie and soule are laide aside!

Oah that I enioied such pleasure,
as dooth the holie soule, when the
senses

of the Imitation of Christ.

senses beeing asleepe, thee is carried aloft, and eleuated aboue her selfe beloued, and coupled to God by the bonde of most hartie frendship! O my God, which art the treasure of mine heart ^b, thou knowest right ^b Mat. 6, 21 well how this would bee the onlie comfort of mine inward grieve. But thou art the geuer, and the pourer in of this ointment.

Thou teacheest ^c, thou exhortest, ^{2. Tim. 3, 16} thou cherishest, thou comfortest, thou carriest, thou vpholdest, thou guidest out and bringest back, thou doost with the soule whome thou hast chosen, euen as thou wilt, and whatsoeuer thou doost and wilt, it is all good.

But I who am as a sowre vessell, altogether vnworthie to receaue th'infusion of thy good spirit, doe humblie craue that plentifulle it maie so spout forth vpon mee, that I maie both taste the sweetenes of thine inward loue, and also perceau those sacred pleasures, the which, I doubt not, the religious soule dooth feeble by thy grace.

I did smell the celestiall perfume a far off, when I did meditate certaine inward cogitations of the minde concer-

The fourth booke

concerning the soule: but, Lord, thou knowest how sildome, how litle I doo thinke of eternall things, how often words doo wither, how rude the vnderstanding, how vnquiet the conscience, how my hart is troobled, darkened and irreligious, and onlie through mine owne default.

Notwithstanding sometime seeking a waie vnto spirituall matters, hauing taken my cogitations with mee in secret, I begin seriouſlie to call into my remembrance the good things of the blessed soule, how great are the celestiall ioies, and spirituall delightes which are in her heart; what peace, what tranquillitie, what hope and reioicing in God her Saviour, whose words be sweete, and face bewtiful. And these cogitations though short theie endure yet when theie come blessed is the houre.

And I thus thinking, and thou enlightening my darkenes, I doo finde iust complaints vpon my selfe, and by priuie holes of grace I perceau how such and such is the soule inwardlie vnited vnto thee, and that so and so thou hast spoken to her.

She is still from all things sensible, and

of the Imitation of Christ.

and thou in the spirit speakest to her
of inuisible matters.

She seemeth as it were to be forsaken of all creatures, and after an vnpeakeable manner thou doost comfort her.

So that I said againe in mine hart
wo to the sinfull soule ^c, to the grie- ^c Deu. 27, 26
ued conscience ^d, to the man which ^d Gala. 3, 10
is neither hote nor colde ^e, destitute ^d Prou. 3, 33
of the light of grace, and of spirituall ^d Prou. 24, 19
comfort, seeking teares, and yet fin- ^e Reue. 3, 15
ding none. ¹⁶

But peace be to him which vnfeinedlie dooth loue Christ, and neuer turneth aside the cies of his heart from his Sauour ^f; but continuallie ^f Coloss. 3, 1
seeketh the things which are pleasing in his cies.

For hee shall walke in peace and equitie, and no stranger shall participate of his pleasure. Hee shall well perceauce that his rest is good, and taste how sweete his Lord God is, in whome hee trusteth ^g. Hee shall see ^g Psal. 34, 8
him far from outward tumults, and with hartie desire expect his prosperous comming. Lo, thus worketh the Lord in his elected vessels ^h.

Hee which commeth vnto him shall not returne emptie awaie: for
cheere-

The fourth booke

cheerefullie hee bestoweth vpon the
thirstie drinke, and bread vpon the
hungrie ^b.

^a Mat. 25, 35

O my God, when thou enterest in-
to the house of the soule which lo-
ueth thee, wilt thou not feede her
with thy milke? yea and bring her
sometime beside her selfe, through
thine abundant sweetnes, to the ta-
king of thee without anie corporall
similitude!

O truth, truth, of what force and
power is loue!

Then wilt thou speake thy word to
her all secretlie, and show the things
that shall bee, and haue bin in most
happie charitie, and fruition, where
the words of man shall no more bee
heard.

From thenceforth thou wilt cause
her no whit to doubt anie more of
eternall rest, and of the felowship
of sancts: but now by differing the
token of speciall grace, thou makest
her the more able to hope for the
things she seeth not ⁱ, and to despise
present things which by sense shee
comprehendeth.

^a Rom. 8, 24

O mercifull God, bee mindfull of
mee a poore begger euen of thy great
mercies ^k; and send the true bread
from

^a 1. Cor. 1, 3

of the Imitation of Christ.

from heauen ¹, thy good word so full ¹ Iohn. 6, 31
of comfort and grace. 33, &c.

CHAP. 11.

1. That all comfort, and pleasures
are in God. 2. A praier that all people
may glorifie the Lord. 3. The blef-
sed state of good men. 4. That
we are to be readie against the
comming of our Saviour
Christ.



Al my bones shall

*saie, Lord, who is like un-
to thee ^a!*

^a Psal. 35, 10

There is one ^b, and
like to him there is

^b Deut. 6, 4

none ^c, euen my GOD it is ^d, to
whome, whatsoeuer is compared, is
nothing ^e.

^c 1 Kin. 8, 23

^d Iohn. 30, 17

^e Pron. 3, 15

Isai. 46, 9

My God is entiere lie to be loued,
and a most faithfull frend, which ne-
uer forsaketh the soule that loueth
him ^f, but continuallie abideth with
her for companie. And if sometime
he hide himselfe, and suffer her to be
troubled, it is not doon of him to de-
stroie, but to trie her ^g, to purge her
, and to instruct her ⁱ. So that euen
when he forsaketh not, but the more
wiselie instructeth, that euerie one
maie

^f Iohn. 13, 1

^g Iam. 1, 12

^h Wisd. 3, 5

ⁱ Psal. 119, 71

The fourth booke

maie see what hee is of himselfe, and how far hee is come forward (in religion.)

O my beloued, thou art all faire and louelie, but not to the flesh, but to the minde; not to the eie or sense, but to the faithfull soule, to him
 * Mat. 5, 8 which hath a pure heart^k, to him which is altogether addicted vnto
 12. Cor. 4, 18 things inuifible and spirituall^l.

So that who so desireth to be vnited to thee by a religious affection, he must of necessitie mortifie in himselfe all fleshlie motions, and aboue all reteine a pure conscience. For thou art much displeased then, when a man doth goe vnto fraile creatures to seeke consolation.

And therefore thou callest me inwardlie to loue thee^m, and thou commandest that I wait for thee: for then I shall finde thee, when I doo humble my selfe, and wish that which thou wilt.

And this shall be all my felicitie, euen freelie to serue thee, neither dreading anie losse, nor seeking anie gaine: because thou allowest that
 * Mat. 10, 37 soule which purelie dooth loueⁿ.

Oah blessed is hee, which both in life and death sticketh onlie to thee!

But

of the Imitation of Christ.

But as for mee I am far-awaie cast
oftentimes from thy fauor by louing
and that both inordinate, and vn-
discreet, transitorie things. But
that I maie not perish with them, I
with all speede will returne, and be-
hold in them thy glorie °, and direct ° Rom. 1, 21
all my cogitations to thee ward.

O my Lord, and God, which of no-
thing hast made all things p, giue p Gene. 1, 1
mee grace for all things to praise 2, &c.
thy name. Iohn. 1, 1

For all power q, wisdom r, good-
nes and mercie is thine f; thine also
is euermlasting glorie and maiestie r.

Thy kingdome is an euermlasting
kingdome °; and thy dominion en-
dureth throughout all ages.

Thou orderest all things z, both
things aboue, and things in earth.

Thou knowest all things y, and
possessest all things z; nothing doeth
resist a, or trouble thee: but quietly
thou rulest the world, and makest the
rebellious to stoupe, and to serue b.

Thou art priue of all things which
are don in the world c; and before
theie were don thou knewest their
endes d.

Thou art the God both of heaven
and earth e, the creator of things
E 1 visible

p Gene. 1, 1
2, &c.

Iohn. 1, 1

Aq. 17, 24

q Reuel. 4, 8

r Iam. 1, 17

f Mat. 19, 17

r Reue. 7, 12

° Pla. 14, 17

x Wisd. 8, 1

y Eccles. 3, 3

verse 19

z Plal. 95, 4

Eccles. 9, 1

a Dan. 4, 32

b Wisd. 12, 3

4, &c.

Daniel. 9, 3

12

c Eccles. 23, 12

19

d Isai. 46, 10

e Ezra. 5, 12

The fourth booke

¶ Psal. 89, 11 visible and inuisible ^f, the gouernor
Psal. 115, 13 of the whole world ^g, and the dispo-
s^r Psal. 47, 1 ser of the seasons ^h.

² O blesse thy seruants, I beseech
^{6, &c.} thee, dispersed far and wide ouer the
¹ Ecclus. 4, 3 world, yet seruing thee most religi-
verse 5 ously. Make them (constantlie) to
^{6, &c.} sound forth thy praise, and in all pla-
ces with one voice to glorifie thy
name.

Stir vp their harts firmelie to loue
thee; and grante that all their enter-
prises maie take a good ende.

Oah, how gracious, and how good
¹ 1. Cor 2, 9 artthou to such as loue thee ⁱ ! how
¹ Psal. 34, 8 sweete art thou to them which taste
thee ^k !

Theie which haue felt thy sweet-
nes, knowe thereby the better how
both to thinke and speake. For thy
sweetnes surpasseth all sweetnes; and
thy pleasures doe sweeten all bitter-
nes.

O Lord my God, holie men haue
spoken, and Prophets haue talked
of thee.

All the godlie from the worlds
beginning haue beleueed in thee,
haue serued thee, haue glorified
thee both with sacrifices and obla-
tions, theie haue praised and blessed
thine

of the Imitation of Christ.

thine holie name: because theie haue
both acknowledged thee to bee the
creator and maker of the vniuersall
world, and also trusted in thee about
all things ¹. 1 Hebr. II, 2
3, &c.

They haue knowen thee in their
visions, for thou hast reuealed thy
name to them; and beside thee they
knewe no God. They obserued the
lawe of thy commandements, which
thou gauest them.

They followed not the foolish imaginations of false Gods: but they worshipped thee which livest for ever ^m, the creator of all things ^a. m 1. Tim. 1, verse 17

Their lifted vp their voice to thee ^{Ag. 17, 24}
 with thankesgeuing : because from ^{Hebr. 1, 2}
 on high thou soundest in their eares,
 saing ^{Exod. 3, 14} *I am that I am. Before mee*
there was no God formed ^{Psa 43, 10} *neither shall*
there bee after mee. I haue ordained
 the things which shall be, and I for-
 get not whatsoeuer is past.

This when theie heard and vnderstood, theie cast the eies of their faith a far off, beleeuing that God will saue vs; and that he which shall come, will come, and will not tarie 9.

21 Knowing these things afore hand
they were not a litle comforted, and

The fourth booke

maruelouſſie aſtoniſhed, at the pre-
ſence of the glorie to come, theie
fainted. But afterward comming by
litle and litle to themſelues, and with
ioie beholding the power of God ap-
proching, theie ſaid, Hee is, euen hee
is the Lord our God, and wee haue
none other. Hee hath taken vs, and
hee will ſaue vs. Hee cannot denie
himſelfe ², becauſe hee is faithfull.
² 1. Tim. 2, 13 As we haue heard, ſo we haue ſeene ¹:
³ as wee haue beleueed, ſo wee haue
ſpoken, and borne witneſſe to the
truth ².

Once the Lord did ſpeake, and it
was doon ². Hee ſaide, My counſaile
ſhall ſtand ²: but yours ſhall come
to naught, O yee ſonnes of men ⁷.
Wo vnto them which imagine
euill ², and afterward make a ſcoffe
at the word of God!
Wo vnto you which doo faigne a
religion out of your owne braine,
and are exalted in your owne po-
wer!

Heare the word of the Lord, yee
which ſerue the Lord: knowe yee
that he hath a controuerſie with the
inhabitants of the earth ².

To turne awaie your ſelues; it is
not good; ſtand yee therefore and
conſider

of the Imitation of Christ.

consider his waies.

Returne you and come vnto him,
so will he ioiefullie receaue you into
fauor; for the Lord is gracious and
mercifull ^b.

^b Exo. 34, 6

He keepeth not his anger as man ^{Jonas. 4, 2}
dooth ^c, but pardoneth all finnes, yea ^{Hos. 11, 9}
and moreouer he restoreth the for-
mer grace with the later.

Onlie returne you with all your
harts: and dedicate your selues who-
lie and vnfeinedlie to his seruice.
Thus doo the sancts speake in mine
cares.

That which musick is at a banquet,
and sweete smelling frankincense in
a censar: euen that is the word of
God in a pure hart.

And thy sancts, Lord, filled with
thy spirit, haue thus sounded forth
the memorie of thine abundant
sweetenes; and haue left their words
vnto vs to be sounded abroade.

But my speech often-time is stop-
ped, so that it hath no passage to as-
cend. But if that fire come from a-
boue, then shal my toong be hot: and
if it once be enflamed, I shall forth-
with be consumed.

I shall not be able to stand in the
presence thereof; for as the winde

The fourth booke

driveth awaie chaffe, so shall sorow be expelled from the hart. And as the rust by the fire: so shal my sinnes be consumed.

The fire of God which consumeth all things, shall sweep the floore of mans hart. Descende, and get vp; tuch me a little, and I shall flee.

Things passed shall be as though theie had neuer been, and that to come shall not be accompted of: for all sinnes shall vtterlie be forgotten.

Old things shall passe awaie, new shall come abundantlie; holie desires shall encrease, and rise vp on all sides, wheresoeuer the good spirit shall blowe.

Feare shall depart, loue shall possesse the harts of all; all affliction shall cesse: for this alteration is by the hand of God.

Therefore that which I saie is, not to mine owne, but to his praise.

The pensie hath comfort; the hungrie, bread; the thirstie, drinke;

The sick is healed; the wauering, assisted; the weake, strengthened; the wearie, quieted; the hopelesse, comforted; the complainer, pittied;

To the blinde, sight; to the wandering, a readie waie; to the knocker, the

the gate is opened.

He which doubted, is now resolved; hee which staggered, is now strengthened; hee that diligentlie enquired, is now entertained ioyfullie by mother charitie. The freend commeth more ioyfullie to meete, than is the soule desirous to speake with him.

Lo now am I present, saith he, saie L. on, what new thing hath fallen out? What, haue you forgotten what you are to suffer and to doo for my sake?

Yet this staied mee not being desirous to go forward with him. So straight-waie I mounted aloft, and forgot all mine affliction. B.

Hee would not by and by discomfort the partie so longing to abide with him: but with gentle words he said, that in due time it should bee performed.

Thy desire is good, and request L. vnto mee dooth like mee well: notwithstanding, it maie not presentlie be graunted.

Go thy waie, and get home to thine owne house, and declare to thine acquaintance what the Lord hath doon for thee.

Saie vnto them, Prepare your hearts

The fourth booke

harts euerie one of you; and laie
downe the heauie burden of sinne;
and bee yee warie, and strong to re-
sist the snares of Satan^d.

Watch and praie, least yee fall into
temptation^e.

^e Mar. 26, 41

Mark. 14, 38

I will come shortly, looke that I
finde you readie.

Lo, I haue warned you aforehand.

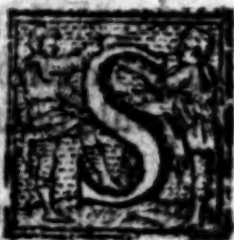
CHAP. 12.

1. The desire of the soule after God.

2. The properties of God by the sondrie
titles ascribed vnto him. 3. None

cometh vnto God, unlesse God
draweth him.

^a Psal. 35, 3



Aie vnto my soule

I am thy saluation^a.

O, of what excel-
lencie art thou, my
soule, what wonderfull
virtue is hidden in thee, that thou
canst neuer bee at rest, vntill thou
haue attained perfect happines, and
found the last end which thou so de-
firest: which once being knowen and
found out, the care is gone.

Oah happines aboue all happi-
nes; o end without end, when shall I
both

of the Imitation of Christ.

both without measure, and euerlastinglie enioie thee!

I finde manie good things in this world. But theie continue not ^b; neither doo theie satisfie my desire ^c.

But one thing is necessarie ^d. This one thing is, that I seeke; this one thing I desire.

For one thing are all things ^e; and of one thing are all things ^f. If I get this thing, I shall be content: but if I enioie it not, I shall continually be tossed, because manie things cannot satisfie mee.

What is this one thing? I am not able to saie what it is; sure I am I desire that, than which, nothing either is, or maie be imagined either better or greater ^g.

For this is not one thing among manie things; but one thing about all things ^h. And it is my God, to whome if I stick, I shall doo well ⁱ.

To him I saie, to him I crie, when I saie, *Saie vnto my soule, I am thy salvation* ^k.

O my soule, my longing soule, what more desirest thou? Is it not better for thee to cleaue vnto one thing, than vnto manie things? Of one thing are manie things ^l, but

e 5

one

b 1. Cor. 7, 31

c 1. Iohn. 1, 15

16

d Eccles. 1, 8

e Luk. 10, 42

f Isai. 43, 7

g Gen. 1, 1

h 2, &c.

i Iohn. 1, 1

3

j Isai. 46, 5

6, &c.

k Tob. 41, 1

2, &c.

l Ezra. 5, 11

m Psal. 73, 28

n Psal. 35, 3

o Aa. 17, 24

The fourth booke

one thing is not of manie things.

Cesse to seeke manie things, ioine thee to one, stick vnto one: for in one thing all things consist.

Let others enquire after manifold and diuers outward things: but do thou seeke one inward good thing, and it is sufficient.

m Mar. 23, 5

Luke. 14, 18

Lo, this man seeketh a farme^m; that man traueleth about his marchandise; another heapeth vp much gold and siluer; another hunteth after pleasures and preferment; another visiteth his freends and kinred; another is merie with his acquaintance; another rideth vnto cities and castles; another doth long to see diuers contries of the world; another desireth wisdom, another preferment, another principallitie, another a kingdome: and thus one wisheth one thing, another man another thing euen aswell among the spirituall sort, as among the secular. But fewe doo seeke one thing, and (other things) purelie and simplie for one thing. And therefore theie neither doo finde anie sure peace; nor yet fauor the inward grace of the spirit.

For so manie as are (the seruants)

of the Imitation of Christ.

of Christ, doo couer not temporall,
not earthlie thingsⁿ, as though they ^{Colos. 3, 1}
were then iolie and glorious felows,
if theie abunded therewith.

What then wilt thou saie that
the things which theie seeke for, doo
touch thee, o deuout soule: in truth
thou canst not.

For my part, I detest all these
things: for my good thing is but one
thing; I loue but one thing, I require
but one thing; and this one thing is
better to mee than all other things
either in heauen or earth.

If thou hast founde such a good
thing, my counsell is, that you hold
and keepe it, for whole sake you haue
contemned all things. For hauing
that, it shall not grieue you to want
other things; naie, you will iudge it
reason for the getting thereof, that
you doo both giue^e, and suffer all
things P. ^{Phil. 3, 8}
^{Rom. 8, 35}

Now therefore, o my soule, seeke
thou after so singular, and superex-
cellent a good thing.

So long as you liue in the flesh, you
are of necessitie to seeke: because
that cannot too carefullie be sought
for, which can at no time sufficiendie
be comprehended. ^{1. Cor. 13, 9}

But

The fourth booke

But then shall you cesse seeking,
when the houre of enioieng is once
1. Cor. 15, come. For then shal he be all in all,
verse 28 euen he which alone is all sufficient
for all, and euerie man.

And although there too hee must
be sought, where he is continuallie
found: yet is hee not there sought
with labor, as in this world, but with
1. Cor. 13, 13 surpassing pleasure, and loue.

What he is in this life to the god-
lie, it maie be declared by his mani-
fold titles: and such as haue experi-
ence (of his goodnes) knowe verie
well how it maie be shoven.

Notwithstanding, consider what
the names of God are, as I haue lear-
ned them in the schoole of experi-
ence: I will recite a few, but the grace
(of his spirit) maie put you in minde
of manie mo beside.

2. Mat. 9, 15 Lo, hee is a spouse^r, to such as
2. 8. mo. 1. loue; but to such as still serue him in

Deut. 6, 13 feare, a dreadfull Lord^u.

Math. 4, 10 Hee is a father, to good children^r;

Math. 6, 9 but to the obstinatelie wicked, a se-

2. Tim. 4, 8 uerelie iudge^r.

Hebr. 12, 23 To the sick, he is a physition^r, and

Matt. 9, 13 to the whole, wholesome foode^r.

John. 6, 56 To the ignorant, a teacher^r, and

John. 7, 16 to the obedient, an everlasting Sa-
uiour.

of the Imitation of Christ.

iour^c.^c Math. 1, 27

Hee is the waie ^d for beginners,
the truth, for proceeders, the life ^e,
for the absolute performers of his
holie will.

^d Ioh. 14, 6^e Iohn. 11, 25

Hee is the hope ^f of repenters, and
a surpassing comforter ^g of the righ-
teous.

^f Col. 1, 27.^g 1. Tim. 1, 1^g Ioh. 14, 26

Hee is a crowne ^h for the humble,
and a punishment ⁱ for the proude.

^h Luk. 2, 32ⁱ Rom. 9, 33

In darkenes, hee is a light ^k; and
in the night, a lanterne ^l.

^k Iohn. 1, 8

9

Hee giueth medicine to the disca-
sed soules, and much wine of com-
fort, to the sorowfull.

Iohn. 3, 19

^l Iohn. 8, 12^l Iohn. 1, 5

With such as stand to the battell,
hee standeth; with such as proceede
in their iornie, he walketh; with such
as feruentlie make haste, hee run-
neth; with such as mount in diuine
contemplation, he flieth.

Doo you praie? hee is present with
you. Doo you reade? hee is talking
with you. Doo you meditate? hee is
still with you.

One and the same God worketh
in all these things, showing himselfe
to euerie one, euen as hee thinketh
good: in his words there is no faulr,
and his works are past finding out.

For great and vnsearchable are
his

The fourth booke

his iudgements^m, and no man is
saie vnto him, whie doost thou
or whie doost thou chuse this man
rather than that manⁿ.

It is follie for a man to reason
gainst the almightie: and all the

will of Adams children is vane, and
to no purpose.

How like you these things, and
how dooth God saue vnto you?

S. Hee seemeth sweete vnto mee,
neither am I offended at his works.

Hee is righteous^o, and who can
rebuke him of ill dealing^p?

Hee that so dooth, dooth set him-
selfe against God, and shal be repro-
ued of his irreprehensible light.

M. But what thou hast heard, what is
it in his presence & scarce vndoubted-
lie so much as a sparckle, without that
which is hidden within.

Aske you what that is & I must saie,
I knowe it not, it is altogether aboue
my capacitie, euen as a certaine
cloude far off, whose beginning and
ende are vnknown.

And therefore meditate rather,
and thinke more often vpon the
base humanitie of Iesus, and doe not
mount vp too high, least of his glori-
ous maiestie you be confounded.

But,

But, forsomuch as burning loue dooth now and then forget all reuerence and feare, you are (in that respect) the more to be borne withall, if sometime, being extreemely set on fire with the loue of Iesus, you doo consider not onlie how hee cried in the manger ⁹, and how hee hanged ⁹ Luke. 2, 8 vpon the crosse ¹: but also how hee ¹ Mat. 27, 31 raigneth nowe in heauen all glori- 32, & c. ouslie ¹, and ruleth all things vnder ¹ Philip. 2, 9 heauen most wonderfullie ¹. 10

O most louelie Iesu, gladlie doo I ¹ Reuel. 1, 5 folow thee in earth: but more glad- S. lie would I folow thee vnto heauen.

Where my treasure is, there would mine hart be also ¹. ¹ Math. 6, 21

Oah thou art my treasure, thou which art at the right hand of the father ¹, art deerer to mee than anie ¹ Rom. 8, 34 creature. For my sake thou wast in- Hebr. 1, 3 carnate, for my sake thou wast ele- uate.

Thou diddest leaue thy selfe an example vpon earth ¹; thou keepest ¹ Ioh. 13, 15 thy selfe for a reward in the heauens. 1. Pct. 2, 23

Vpon thee therefore mine eies are fixed, and after thee doo my feete trace. To thee mine hart saith, my face seeketh thee o Lord, I will continuallie seeke thy face ¹. ¹ Psal. 27, 8

The fourth booke

^aIob. 13, 24

O Lord, how long wilt thou hide
the sight of thy glorie? Whie hidest
thou thy face^a, and takest mee for
thineemie^c;

Thou knowest right well, my mind
will be distracted hether and thither,
and be diuerslie beate, vntill it be fast
joined to thee her freende in the
heauens.

^bSal. S. 8, 6

For the force of loue knoweth not
how to be quiet^b: but vncestantlie
maketh enquire of her louer, sendeth
forth messengers, and doleth
prayers: neither doth it so giue ouer,
because loue will altogether possesse
that which it desireth.

^cSal. S. 1, 3

Therefore drawe mee^c, that I
maie begin zelouslie to run after
thee. I had neede to be drawen, and
with great force to be drawen. For
vnlesse thou drawe, none wil come^d,
none will folow: because euerie one
is naturallie inclined to himselfe-
ward.

^dIohn. 6, 44

But if thou once drawe, lo then I
doo hasten, then I run, then I waxe
hot. But if thou doo not drawe, I doo
neither run, nor seeke, yea scarce
haue I anie desire at all to folowe.
If thou reach out thine hand, I doo
run so much the more swiftlie, as
thou

of the Imitation of Christ.

thou forceable doost drawe.

This is the voice of my louer drawing^e, And when I am lift up from the earth, I will drawe all men vnto mee.

• Ioh. 12, 32

O sweete Iesu, drawe mee after thee, and then not I onlie, but all shal run after thee by the sauor of thine ointments^e.

f Sal. S. 1, 2

3

First therefore drawe mee after thee, then let others folow, seeing an example of good life.

But, that we maie not waxe proude, it is good that we marke this withall; howe that wee began to run, not through our owne strength, but by the sauor of thine ointments.

This is the heauenlie drawing, without which no man can go forward, no not so much as begin, as likewise thou didest saie: No man can come vnto mee, except my father drawe him.

g Ioh. 6, 44

So that whome the father draweth, he foloweth thee, and forsaketh himselfe.

He seemed to be well drawn that said^e: Master, I will folow thee, whether soether thou goest. But euerie one hath not the gift to be so affected: neither is it a weake stomach that can so readelie folowe thee vnto all things.

h Mat. 8, 19

Luke. 9, 57

What

The fourth booke

M. What let hast thou, o my soule, that thou doost not forsake all for Iesus sake? Whie so vnwillinglie doo you depart from vane and transitorie things? What good can these worldlie things doo you?

Behold, while you passe by mortall things, and visibie creatures, willing to delight your self in them, you forget better things. While you so doo, you seuer your selfe from the soueraigne good thing, and turne your minde from the true, blessed, and eternall life.

And therefore you shall continue miserable and wretched, tull of grieve

Eccles. 2, 17 and vexation¹.

For turne your selfe on which side you will, and you shall finde matter of continuall sorow, and much rediousnes, vntill you turne againe vnto thy creator: because he is thy peace^k, and secure quietnes.

But, if thou neither make staie in earthlie things, nor fasten thy foote in the mire, but rather beholde and worship in the glasse of worldlie creatures, not the figure which passe

1. Cor. 7, seth awaie¹, but him whose image
verse 3¹ and superscription it is, blessed art

Reue. 21, 4 thou, and shalt neuer die^m.

For

of the Imitation of Christ.

For when thou seekest after these
 visible things not to enioie them,
 but beholdest them to the ende to
 glorifie the name of thy creatour,
 by making to thy selfe of his best
 and basest woorkes a kinde of lad-
 der wherewithall thou maist ascend,
 thou shalt be deliuered so from the
 filthie bowels of this world, and
 thoroughlie bee coupled to
 thy desired ende, which
 is aboue all things
 the blessed God
 for euer and
 euer.

**CHAP.**

The fourth booke

CHAP. 13.

I. How, and when the soule and God
are united together. 2. The miserie
where God is not
present.



^a Psal. 63, 8

*My Soule cleaueth
vnto thee*

O my God, the true
comforter, thou knowest how thou likest
me well, and how I take pleasure daile
to be talking with thee secretlie
alone.

But where maie I seeke thee, if
happelic I do misse thee for an hour?
who shall bring mee vnto thee?

^b Isai. 46, 9

Thou art God above all things ^b;
and I beneath all things a miserable
man. Thou art in heauen ^c, and I in
the world. Thou art most high, but I
am poore, and a begger.

^c Matth. 6, 9

Who euer hath measured the distance
betweene heauen and earth?
Far asunder be theie: but farder art
thou fro mee, o God.

Who therefore shall vnite mee to
thee? either thou must doo it, or
none can.

But

of the Imitation of Christ.

But if thou wilt, it maie speedelie be doon. And thou knowest, how of my selfe I maie easelie fall: but that I doo stand, and go forward, it is of thy goodnes.

So that my soule dependeth vpon the grace of thy spirit, and of the infusion of thy speciall fauor.

If thou command, it shall be lifted vp from earth: but if thou turne away thy face, it shall be greatlie troobled.

But of thy woonted fauor and mercie receaue mee; and let thy right hand guide mee wonderfullie vnto thee.

Heare this, all yee people^d, giue eare all yee that dwell in the world; for it is an easie thing with God to bring it to passe, as it is written, that the rich and poore maie be all one.

I am poore, and lack manie things; but this my God is rich, and wanteth nothing^e.

And although no great experience, yet I haue an vndoubted testimonie to prooue that the soule through grace maie be vnited to God.

My beloved is mine, saith he f, and I am his, he feedeth among the lilies.

This

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This is the testimonie of the frende, and his dearling; of the bridegroom, and the spouse: and it is a verie fit, and a strong testimonie of the holie lawe.

[3 Ioh. 17, 21] The next is like to this: *I will that theie all maie be one, as thou, o father, art in mee, and I in thee.*

Behold the notable testimonies of two bookes, whereby it plainelie appeareth, that the soule, through speciall grace from aboue, maie be linked familiarlie vnto God.

And although it rarelie come so to passe: yet is it decreelie to be accounted of, and not altogether vnknownen to the louer. And againe, though verie hardlie: yet may it fall out.

The soule therefore so conioined to God, let no man dare to separate, or to trouble.

If thou doost woonder at this maruelous vnion, woonder thou and maruell at the excellencie of his goodnes, and at the strange and singular vniting of the humane bodie (to his Godhead.)

Hee maie doo what he will, which [h Psal. 135, 4] onlie doth great woonders.^b

If thou lookest for merits, you shall

of the Imitation of Christ.

shall finde it is his good pleasure to haue it so.

O sweete societie with Christ, and ynder the wings of Christ!

O gracious coniunction, full of loue, and sweetenes of the holie Ghoste, the which is perceaued better than vttered!

These things belong vnto the soule that is estranged from all worldlie matters, and is not delighted with this present life: but is carried aloft in godlie meditation.

The more the louer knoweth this, the more am I ignorant. Notwithstanding, gladlie would I bee in presence when the deuout soule is in such an happie case.

And then is she so, when the spouse and she is together at the noone daie. But then it fareth ill with her, and that verie ill too, if it happen that Iesus bee awaie; if the perfumes of grace run not from aboue; if no pleasure she take in the holie Bible; if it bee irksome for her to continue in praier and godlie meditation; if the cloudes of the hart be so thick, and hurtfull cogitations doo so preuaile, that theie cannot be restrained, but do labor to ouerwhelme in a manner
all

The fourth booke

all the former good things.

O Lord God, whie doost thou so? What plaie is this? O blessed Iesus, what meane you heereby?

If it were not offensive to thine honor, I could wish to haue farther communication betweene thee, and thy beloued.

Forso much as she is so greatlie desirous of thy gracious presence, whereby she may be nourished with chaste delightes, I doo much muse whie sometime you suffer her to sit so desolate. Thou passest by, and goest thy waie, as though she had no desire vnto thee. But she is alone all

Isai. 26, 9 pensive. For thus she saith in effect *With my soule haue I desired thee in the night.*

It is night with her, when thou, the true light, art not present. So that she praieth for thy presence, that the darkenes of sinne comprehend her not. For she feeleth manifold discomforts when thy gracious visitation is taken from her. For, had she not suffered somewhat, she had neuer so earnestlie cried vnto thee.

Another also, which was before *Psal. 63, 8* said, cried thus *My soule cleaueth*

vnto

of the Imitation of Christ.

unto thee.

But I thinke no trouble is or seemeth so troublesome to her, as the want of thy presence.

And no maruell, if through this want the waieward soule doo languish awaie in sorow. For thou art verie hardlie found at anie time, and being found, she reioiceth at thy returne, hoping to spend the daie merrilie with thee: but thinking little of thy departure, she suspecteth no aduersitie to come. But, handling another matter secretlie, thou often takest thy flight.

For thou departest suddenlie out of her hands, when she cannot laie holde vpon thee.

I doo praise thee, but in this how shall I praise thee? If thou hast anie praise and sweetenes, whie doo you seeme to forgoe it in this deed?

If thou wert not, she might be offended. But she can take none offence at thee, who so mightelie doost loue her.

If therefore anie good reason be signified vnder that lesson, o God showe it mee.

For gladlie would I vnderstand the same: neither do I thinke it vnnes-

The fourth booke

sarie to learne though it be but little.

Because no man of himselfe can behold thy secret iudgements : but it is thy light which dooth both enlighten darke, and driue awaie hurtfull things.

What therefore may the cause be that sometime so secretlie you withdrawe your selfe from the soule, she not witting thereof?

Doo you loue her, or no? If you doo loue her, then whie do you leaue her, my beloued? If you loue her not, whie then haue you visited her before time? Againe, if you loue her not, whie doo you make returne, whie knock you at the doore, whie enter you in againe? What, is it of lightnes that you doo so both go and returne? God forbid.

But so often change dooth not a little greeue her; yea much it dooth disquiet her. Yet the grieve would be the lesser, if thou wouldest saie plain-

¹Ioh. 14, 28 *lie¹, I doo goe, and will come vnto you; your hearts shall reioice, and your ioye no*

²Ioh. 16, 22 *man shall take from you^m.*

But now you cast out neuer a by-word; onlie she thinketh vpon that speech, which she well perceaueth to be performed in her selte, how Iesus
hid

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hid himselfe, and went out of the Temple. ^{• Ioh. 8, 59}

A fewe things I haue against you, but my complaint dooth spring out of a good roote. I humbly request to be instructed, I loue not to contend.

And therefore, when occasion serueth, make answer I beseech you.

Also let the godly soule saie for her selfe soniewhat for her learning.

Likewise make you answer boldly when your part requireth.

O my soule, answer thou thy beloved boldly. For thy freend will patientlie heare, and meete thee with milde words, that you maie suffer none hinderance.

For if hee bee not thy comforter, who will comfort thee? And who more favorable will beare thine infirmitie, than hee which beareth all things, and yet is not burdened? And to whome more safely can you reueale your miserie, than to him which perfectly knoweth all things?

Or in whome maie you put more confidence, than in the truth which deceaueth not? <sup>• Ecclus. 23
verse 19
• Iohn. 6, 14</sup>

Now, if anie stranger, or one that is not a freend to the spouse, shall heare these things, let him be driuen

The fourth booke

from the doores. But if hee loue the spouse, if he be faithfull, if deuoute and spirituall; let him haue free ingresse.

¶ If hee bee a keeper of a good conscience, a louer of virtue and discipline; if hee bee pure in hart ⁹, and cleere in iudgement; if humble in himselfe, and good towards others; if he can neither wickedlie carpe at, vanelie extoll, rashlie reprocue, impudentlie maintaine, nor proudlie commend things; but contrariwise if he haue learned both, the things which hee conceaueth not, to reuerence, and also rightlie to interpret obscure and mysticall matters, let him haue entrance, and heare the communication. For the affection of the hart through the sound of words ought to be noted rather than the qualitie of voices.

¶ And therefore tell me, O soule, how doost thou feelee thy selfe wanting now the grace of thy beloued? I for my part doo see that hardlie I can take it well, if he keepe himselfe long awaie: and I conceiue the like of you.

¶ If you thinke good let vs sit heere together, and confer we heereof to our comfort.

of the Imitation of Christ.

CHAP. 14.

I. A lamentation of the soule for the
want of grace.



Mine hart breaketh

for desire.

^a Psa. 119, 20

What is it thou saiest?

Why saiest thou, Zion,

the Lord hath forsaken

mee?

Fear not daughter Zion, thou lo-
uing and religious soule, lo thy king,
and welbeloued freend commeth to
thee.

Arise, stand vp, and beholde the
ioie which commeth toward thee
from thy God.

I haue sought, saith the soule, and S.
haue not found. I haue called, and ^b Sal. S. 3, 2
he hath not answered, and therefore
I doo breake for thought.

Then said I, this is the voice of the M.
Turtle hauing lost her mate.

It is not now with you as it was
yesterdaie, and carewhile, when you
sang the songs of mirth.

The morning is past, night com- S.
meth, and the spouse resteth him-
selfe at noone tide: yet maie I not

The fourth booke.

come nigh him.

M. Your words are sorowfull, and your eies shed teares. O soule, thou art grieued, and hast neede of comfort. But speake, whence commeth your grieve :

S. I am not troubled either for gold or siluer, or anie worldlie matter, neither for lucre, nor for hurt, neither for iniurie, nor for pouertie, for I am now dead, and crucified to the world.

M. If I bee not deceaued, long since you renounced the world. But whether in all things perfectlie you haue denied the same, and art come euen into a verie hatred of your selfe, I would faine knowe.

S. Verie fewe haue that gift, and it is especiallie looked for at your hands.

M. While therefore are you so pen-siue : What haue you forgon ? If it be for your freend his sake, I must needs confesse you doo well to be sad : neither should you take delight in anie thing, vntill he returne, and visit you againe.

But in the meane while, how doo you susteine your selfe vpon the beloued, O sweete soule :

And sure I am hee is not alwaies present

of the Imitation of Christ.

present at a wish. Therefore while he is absent, what comfort haue you, wherein doo you take delight?

Tell me your secrets, be theie neuer so gricuous.

That you beare the absence of Christ heauilie, no man doubteth, but he onlie that loueth not.

Now you are sad, I take it, not for this world, but for the spouse Christ. And I knowe full well that when hee shall returne, you will be merrie againe: because hee will not alwaies forget you. For he hath said ^c Ioh. 14, 18 *I will not leaue you comfortlesse, but I will come to you.*

Therefore your wordes are not vane, being vttered with such griefe, but theie declare a louing hart, and strike the cold affection, which is not inflamed with the loue of Christ.

For your voice, is the voice of a Turtle, not the crieng of a murmurer. And therefore I trust you shall finde him, whose losse you so lament.

Notwithstanding I demaund, What saie you of him, whose absence you doo so bewaile? Is he good, or no?

Doubtlesse hee is good, and singularly good too ^d, righteous, and ^p Mat. 19, 16

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faithfull, in him there is no wicked-
nes, neither can be.

^e Job. 34, 10

M. Whie therefore lament you for
the good in whome is no deceit?

^f 1. Pet. 2, 22

S. I weepe not for the good, in respect
that hee is good: but I lament mine
owne miserable condition, because
I haue lost a good and a faithfull
freend.

I, euen I haue deserued this: but
alas, alas that I kept not his fauor.

81. 1. 101

By the lack, I haue now learned
what I haue lost. And the absence of
a freend sheweth, what his presence
did good.

I was merrie and iocund with him:
but I did no whit consider of his
speedie departure.

He came skipping vpon the moun-
taines, hee was ioyefull and iocund
in the porches of mine house. And
straight-waie I locked the doores of
the flesh, and let in the beloued vnro
mee. I did sit, and rested within yn-
der his shadowe from the haile and
raine. And it did mee much good to
haue his companie.

Whie should I not reioice? Hee is
my ioye, and the comfort of mine
hart.

81. 1. 101

Ah, what had I? And what then
did

of the Imitation of Christ.

did I possesse?

I am not able to vtter, how well I prospered then; neither is it conuenient that I should. I could not desire more then I had, hee being present whome alone I loued.

Oah, how did I loue, when I despised both my selfe, and all things beside!

I had either little or no care at all of anie thing that might delight me; for I was rauished with loue of him, and whatsoeuer was not my beloued, I loathed as altogether vnfauerie. But he being taken awaie, I am in a manner cleane out of hart.

For my soule depended vpon his grace, because I had none other comfort besides him, whose absence I doo thus lament. He did content me, and was sufficient to the making of true mirth in deed.

As I would, so was he; and whatsoeuer he enioined mee, I tooke it in good part, and I consecrated my selfe wholie and franklie to his will. So that there was a good agreement, and great quietnes betweene vs.

No man durst be so bold as to interrupt our silence, when hee had commanded so through my mouth.

The fourth booke

L. I charge you, o daughters of Ierusalem, by the roes, and by the hindes of the fielde, that yee stir not vp, nor waken my loue, vntill thee please.

S. Now therefore note, if you be able to conceaue my woords, what great cause I haue to lament the absence of my freend, by whose presence I began to bee so rich with all good things.

M. Heereunto I answered. I knowe well what you saie: by often experience I haue proued so much as you speake.

But let vs comfort our selues in this, that the dispensation of his will, is the encrease of our zeale, and deuotion.

And now I haue receaued with thankfulness that which you haue vttered: notwithstanding, I would more thoroughlie haue them beaten into mine head. For theie which be hard of conceiuing, are oftentimes to be told of a matter.

CHAP.

of the Imitation of Christ.

CHAP. 15.

1. Touching the fruite of freendship.

2. *The benefits of Christ upon man.*

3. The true felicitie and ioye of

the soule. 4. The affinitie be-

tweene Christ, and the

soule of man.

*Raised bee GOD**which hath not put back
my praier from mee.*

a Psal. 66, 30

Therefore I am now
againē zelouſſie to en-
quire, if your freend at anie time left
you without inward comfort.

What meane you? What muſe you
heere about? How alſo maie hee bee
reconciled and reclaimed?

Of all freendſhip, I beſeech you,
o deere and beloued ſoule to Chriſt,
conceale none of theſe things which
I am to demaund of you.

You maie ſo doo me a pleaſure, in
opening to mee your godlie cogi-
tations.

By your talke, I ſhall be able to
meaſure the waight of my grieſe,
whether iuſt lie or without cauſe I
was penſiue.

For

The fourth booke

For I haue seene you sometime merie, and sometime sad, and by and by glad againe, and by you I did somewhat consider of my selfe,

But I suppose the chiefeft cause of this your alteration is that returning and departure of the beloued. The which hath made mee, perceauing how you haue run ouer manie matters, for mine instruction to resort vnto you.

S. According to your desire, I will bend my selfe somewhat to vnfolde the things which I feele within mee, both when I am with my freend, and also when I am alone, looking for him whome I so doo loue.

This first vnderstand, I reape not so much ioie and pleasure by his presence, but I finde as much sorow and bitterness through his absence.

But whie it pleaseth him so to come and go, rather I had he should declare than I.

But you shall heare it when I haue finished the words of my song, because in the ende we will bring him in vnto vs, and sitting among vs, hee shall teach vs his order, the which he vseth to show vnto such as desire his presence.

In

of the Imitation of Christ.

In the meane while giue attentiuē care vnto mee, and be not offended at mine homelie speech.

For wee are now come together to stir vp our harts, and either to weep together, or through loue to reioice together.

For wo vnto him that is alone ^b, because when hee falleth into some sorow or tentation, there is not a second to lift him vp. And if to be together theie will comfort one the other, while one being sad, the other minisreth ioie; or if he refuse to be comforted, he shall be pittied forthwith, and grieve will be taken for his grieve; and so it will fall out that either theie will both be glad, or both sad together. And although some sorowe doo yet still continue for some aduersitie, or matter of sorowe: yet the more patientlie theie beare it, because their harts be so linked, that nothing can change or alter their mindes.

^b Eccles. 4.
verse 10

Now, who seeing this faithfull concord of mindes, but must needs breake into these woords, and saie,
Behold, how good, and how comelie a thing
it is, brethren to dwell euen together.

^c Psal. 133, 1

And therefore I can the more
boldlie

The fourth booke

boldlie tel you what I thinke, because I dread no deceit, or subtilie in you.

d Wisd. 11, 23

e Act. 17, 22

Lo, this all sweete spouse, and best beloued friend, our Lord Iesus Christ, the louer of holie soules^d, euen of pure loue, not able otherwise to doo, allured mee vnto him; and when I was not, he gaue me life^e, wisdom, and power to behold this common light.

Hee gaue mee grace to be borne anewe by Baptisme, and adorned mee with the roabe of his pretious merits.

Ouer and besides, when afterward I had foulie bespotted my selfe with sinne, and was far vnfit to loue him, he cast not his eie vpon my filthines, but vpon the side of his mercies.

f Rom. 8, 30

For when as yet I wandered out of the waie, hee reclaimed mee of his goodnes^f, not suffering mee to perish in this wicked world.

Moreouer, he hath prouided mee a place to rest in so long as I liue in this mortall bodie.

Notwithstanding, this dwelling ynder the shadow of the beloued is not the true rest, nor the rest which shall for euer continue: but that is the

of the Imitation of Christ.

the true rest, which wee shall feele
after the labors of this present life. 3 Reue. 21, 4

Yet for the soule to perceauē her
selfe to be vnburdened of worldlie
cares, and there to rest where she
maie the more fullie serue her belo-
ued, and attend vpon him in the se-
cret chamber of silence, it is a kinde
of comfort.

Furthermore, my freend hath not
left, but assisted mee in my diuers
troubles, and forest tentations.

Also, he hath both instructed mee
oftentimes with profitable sermons,
and confirmed mee in his word.

And as yoong plants are woont to
be watred with showers: so he hath
watered me with inward comfort,
that the virtue newlie implanted
within me maie not wither.

And he said to me, If thou hast a
lust vnto me, and wilt harken vnto
me, thou shalt enioie good things;
if thou wilt doo, whatsoeuer I com-
mand you, thou art a frend of mine. L. h Ioh. 15, 14

If thou wilt choose me, and loue
me aboue all things, all things that
you aske, my father will giue you:
but if you forgoe me, then shalt thou
come to destruction, for my wrath
shall bee incensed against thee; if
thou

The fourth booke

thou seeke after another, he shal not please thee long, but thou wilt loath and abhor him. Because I am the sal-
uation, and the life of the soule.

1 Iohn. 14, 6

Iohn. 11, 25

So I turned mee vnto him which
S. had doon me good, and expelling my
selfe from out the dust of earthlie af-
fections, I decreed in mine hart from
thenceforth to serue him onlie: be-
cause I found nothing better than
him, nor could imagine no couenant
more profitable.

Let others ier, and seeke what
freendship theie will else-where, I am
thoroughlie perswaded this is the
true man of the soule, for whose sake
me thinks I could gladlie forsake
this world, to enioie his loue euer-
lastinglie.

And therefore I stuck vnto him,
for he liked me still; neither could I
finde a better freend.

For my soule alwaie hath excee-
dinglie desired such a one, as is the
greatest, for power, the best for good-
nes, the woorthiest for dignitie, and
the most happie for all good things.

And because he is verie curteous,
he gaue me comfortable words,
warelie fore-seeing that theie should
neither terrefie, nor breake mee
through

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through ouer-much roughnes, but rather enioine and teach mee that which should bee both light, and sweete to be borne, that so my yong affection might the better be drawen on, and the more forceable addicted to the freend beloued, and shrinke not back.

She shall the better, said he, be instructed, and profit, if not by force, but through gentlenes she be prouoked forward. She wil the more easilie receaue my yoake, rather by loue with rewards, than by feare with punishment. And if she neede impulsion, let it wiselie be vsed, that violence doe not ouerthrowe her. M.

For he knew right well what was best for a yong plant, and what profit this his kindnes would bring vnto mee, especiallie at the time of triall, when I should easilie call into my remembrance the good things which at the first he did vnto my soule, and thereby take courage to proceede in the battell.

He would not straight-waie open vnto me, what and how much trouble I was to endure in his seruice; but sometime hee tempered aduersitie with prosperitie, well considering my weak-

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weakenes at the first, vntill through experience I had gotten strength to endure affliction.

After all this he carried me about, enstructed, and boare me vpon his shoulders.

Hee conducted me ouer the holie Scripture, and with the heate of his holie Spirit he armed me against the wicked tentations of Satan.

Moreover, he placed before mine eyes examples of all the virtues, namelie, the holie Patriarches, and Prophets, besides the glorious lights of the new Testament.

Even as a Mother teacheth her litle childe, so hee instructed mee, breaking spirituall shales, and putting the carnels into my iawes, because theie were sweete to be eaten.

Search if you can what theie signifie, and where such maye be found.

Open the apostolicall booke, reade aduisedlie, and see if you are able to comprehend so great mysteries.

Peruse the Prophet Isaiah; looke into the Gospell, the light of all lights; and marke if theie doe not yeeld most pleasant notes of themselves.

In them whatsoeuer you finde which

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which is obscure, and hard to be vnderstood, that is a nut in a shel.

But if you heare it expounded, and vnderstand that which afore you did not, then broken, is the shel, and the sweetnes of the nut dooth sauer in the hart. And so are we to iudge of other darke sentences. Whereby you maie behold so manie nuts, as you see hidden sentences.

And now, thinke you, did he beare me on his shoulders? That he did so often as he beheld mine infirmitie, and yet neither cast me off, nor despised me, but patientlie and mercifullie did beare with me.

2. Pet. 3, 9

Againe, he did beare me on his shoulders, when he made other men ro beare with mine infirmities, and whatsoeuer was blameworthy within mee.

Besides, yet more louinglie he did beare me on his shoulders when he bare his crosse vnto the place, called the place of dead mens sculs¹, where hee was crucified. For then was I a more heauie burden vnto him, than the crosse was. And my sins were more grievous to his bones², than this wood of the crosse to his back. Because for my sake that crosse was

1 Ioh. 19, 17
18, &c.

1. Pet. 2, 24

carried,

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Isai. 53, 5 carried ^a, not for his owne sake.

6 Oah, how is hee aboue all things to be loued, and to be worshipped, by whose grace and merits I am thus
 Luke. 15, 4 both found out ^a, and redeemed ^p.
 5, &c. And therefore he shall be as decre to
 Gal. 3, 13 me, as the child is to his mother.

But well I knowe, that I am far vnmeete to loue him. Notwithstanding my boldnes commeth from his goodnes. Neither could I doo otherwise but run vnto his most freendlie embracements, when hee showed himselfe so kinde vnto mee.
 I doo well remember what the Prophet David in a certaine place doth

1. Sam. 18, 18 *What am I? and what is my life, or the familie of my father in Israel, that I should be sonne in lawe to the King?*

But our affinitie together is much more excellent, than this of David and Saul. Because ours is a pure and sincere kindred, not with flesh and blood, but betweene God himselfe, betweene faith vniuolated, and a good conscience.

Of this, did that Disciple whome Iesus loued, speake on this wise
 1. John. 4, 4 *Greater is hee that is in you, than hee that is in the world.*

For

of the Imitation of Christ.

For God is loue^r, and loue bringeth forth this kinred. 1. Ioh. 4, 16

Therefore sith Dauid thought himselfe far vnmeet to be sonne in lawe vnto an earthlie King: much more abashed ought I to be, to enter into alliance with the King of all Kings, that vouchsafeth to allure me, vile wretch, into his freendship.

So that he hath delt with mee, not according to my deserts, but euen as it seemed good in his mercifull eies.

Oah blessed, and happie art thou, soule, now thou art fast bound with the chaine of the heauenlie loue!

Oah how noble, and free art thou, seeing thou art priuie euen to the sighings of so holie copulation!

But seing I haue spent manie words about the beloued, and yet haue not answered fullie vnto your demaund, let vs now begin

afresh, and God grant that our speech may bee both to our comfort, and profit.

CHAP.

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CHAP. 16.

1. The more wee loue Christ, the more we maie.
2. Tentation and when.
3. Happines of the life to come.
4. How to beare affliction.



Ehold, as the eies of seruants looke vnto the hands of their masters; and as the eies of a maiden vnto the hand of her mi-

Psal. 123, 2 *stres* : so mine eies are fixed continually vpon my freend.

Since first I began to loue him, I haue had a great desire to continue with him. And this mine intent liked him well, and he allowed the same,

John. 15, 5 *saieng* :

Hee that abideth in mee, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruite.

But that the truth, the strength, and the puritie of my loue might appeere, it was becouefull that I should be tempted. And so I could not bee, vnlesse he both suffered the same, and hid himselfe.

And, because tentation serueth both for the purging of the inner man, and for the frutefull bringing forth

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forth of virtue; and also for the better perceiving the spirituall graces of God, I was tried, and exercised therewithall.

How stronglie, and how often hee flang me this waie, and that waie, my God and Lord, which knoweth all secrets ^d, and is a witnesse to euerie ^d *Ecclus. 13,* priue cogitation of the hart ^e, and ^e *Act. 15, 8* still seeth mee, and perceaueth how I am nothing else but a fraile creature ^f, euen he knoweth right well. ^f *Psa. 102, 11*

If therefore hee had not assisted mee, when I was extreemely afflicted, doubtles I had perished ^g, being readie to fall into the pit of desperation. But hee, whose manner is to comfort the troobled in spirit ^h, ^g *Psa. 119, 91* ^h *Psal. 34, 18*ooke mercie ypon mee.

For, if God helped and assisted not, who were able to beare so manifold tentations!

And therefore it was of his great mercie that I stood before the face of such trooblesome tempests: and also it is of the same his goodnes, that still I doo stand and fall not.

But heereof I maie not vanelie boast so long as I liue in this mortall bodie.

For though I see the element is
now

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now cleere, yet doo I not thinke that long it will continue quiet. For the winde sodeinlie will arise, and that happelie when wee thinke least thereof.

So that by so much I perceauē I doo neede my freend his assistance, by how much I perceauē I doo lie open on all sides to troobles.

1 Reuel. 21, 4 We shall be quiet no where but in heauenⁱ, where my freend doth feed his elect with ioie and exultation.

But when there? What can I speake thereof? Scarce can I thinke anie thing thereof, and that not euidentlie enough; and enter therein I maie not.

Oah that he would come, and set mee in that all glorious, quiet, and fructfull pasture of his sancts, where neither Satan is, nor danger to be feared!

As yet I toile in the sea, and whether I shall attaine vnto the port of saluation by reason of my troobles arising through so manie contrarie windes, I am vtterlie ignorant.

So that I am altogether out of quiet. Notwithstanding, it is a shield and comfort vnto mee, that I stil doe behold the light of faith; that with

all

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all submission I seeke the fauor of my beloued; that I beare toward him a constant hope; that I will not bee separated from his loue ^k; and that ^kRom. 8, 35 I doo rest vpon his prouidence, and vnsearchable goodnes, more than vpon my selfe.

And therefore, though too too often I doo stagger, yea and fall too sometime into sinne: yet am I not to despire, but rather continuallie to flie vnto him, and to crie:

O Lord my God, haue mercie vpon mee, and suffer mee not to perish through my manifold tentations, but assist mee faithfullie, that valiantlie I maie resist, and overcome.

Reach out thy right hand vnto the worke of thine owne hands ¹, oah ¹Tob. 14, 15 thou which triest mee by Satan, and ²Psal. 95, 7 settest mee oftentimes on thy left hand.

And if anie such temptation shall come, as will staie mee from crieng vnto the Lord, then will I sigh from the bottom of mine hart. For hee knoweth euen the verie secrets of the hart ^m, and is priuie to the gro- ^mPsal. 7, 9 nings of the spirit ⁿ. It is not his will ⁿRom. 8, 16 that anie one euen of the least should ²⁷ perish.

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• Mat. 18, 14 perish °.

Oah, how great was his goodnes
to mee-ward, in that it pleased him
to be present with me in my trooble,
when I did not knowe, nor could
marke so much! For often hee pre-
serued me from beeing vtterlie giuen
ouer vnto my wicked affections.

Through his secret iudgement it
came to passe now and then, that I
fell, and was foiled euen in trifles,
P Psal. 119, 73 that I might not waxe proude P, and
be high minded for great things, but
learne through humiliation, how I
was nothing euen then when I see-
med to stand vpright, and to flourish.

And therefore I wish you not o-
uer-rashlie, or quicklie to commend
mee, though I seeme to prosper in
your sight, but reserue all praise vn-
till the good daie of my death, yea
rather praise the Lord, and not mee.

Giue the glorie vnto God on
high, which assisted mee in all my
tentations.

For hee deliuered mee of his mer-
cie manie a time, when I was taken
of mine enemies.

Also, when theie came as a whirle-
winde to destroie mee, hee sent out
his arrowes, and scattered them,
and

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and he encreased lightnings and appaled them, so that theie left me for a time. Because he would not haue mee to be without that, which from time to time he hath acquainted his sancts withall.

A&. 14, 22

So that I had afterward a little quietnes, and peace by the meanes of my freend.

Psal. 34, 19

Whereupon, I did betake mee not vnto bodelie, or worldlie, but vnto spirituall ease, beholding the earth a far off, and casting my thoughtes vpon the secrets of heauen.

Colos. 3, 1

I gaue diligence to see what manner of person I am, and how I might best please him, which had reuealed vnto me so manie tokens of loue, far beyond all deserts of mine.

2

And so much as in mee laie, I wished continuallie for this ioiefull peace, the better to cleaue vnto him, and to serue him the more freelie.

But manie times the soule hath not her desire. But sometime it is granted, sometime vpon good consideration it is differred.

For who would not wish still to rest vnder the shade of the beloued, if it might be granted him, and if time and place were conuenient?

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But now my freend worketh with mee againe.

I feele not affliction alwaie, neither yet doo I enioie continuall rest, but by an euening and morning a daie is made.

For this mortall life is spent in comming and going both through
* Act. 14, 22 prosperitie and aduersitie *.

This was in the mind of that sanct
* Job. 7, 18 which said :

*Thou doost visit him in the morning,
and triest him euerie moment.*

Notwithstanding, it seemeth a kinde of rest, if the enimie doo neither too often, nor too importunate-
lie assaile.

And therefore when it shall be granted mee euen a little to rest my selfe sweetelie in my beloned, I will take it in good part, and reioice. I will reioice I saie, yea and alwaie reioice for that grace of God.

Moreouer, it maketh mee bolde to praie vnto him in all my necessities, because he hath freelie preuented mee so oftentimes with his mercifull visitation.

For when he dooth but approach, minding to keepe holie daie with mee, euen then suddainlie there shineth

neth a light ouer mine hart, which
forthwith driueth out the cloudes of
all wicked cogitations, whereby I doo
enioie the long desired cleerenes of
God his light.

Because no vncleane, nor filthie
thing can stand where he entereth
in ², for hee loueth puritie ³, and is
the ingrasser of the same; so that of
necessitie all satanicall illusion, toge-
ther with the pomps of this world,
must be packing.

² Reuel. 21,
verse 27
³ Matth. 5, 8

Therefore my passions and tenta-
tions which I did endure being sup-
prised, I began both the more eu-
dentlie to knowe, and the more ear-
nestlie to loue, and the more hartelie
to praise him, for vouchsafing at the
length to beate back the damned
crewe of the wicked from assailing
mee.

For theie doo disturbe my peace,
and sin dooth so shut vp my mouth,
that I am ashamed to speake vnto
my welbeloued.

But in vaine doo theie bend them-
selues against his power and wise-
dome, because euen in a moment he
can slide downe into mine hart, and
poure in secretlie good motions, that
I maie both contemne, and vtterlie
neglect

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neglect all their priuie whisperings.

O my faithfull, and all happie freend; take mee so vnto thee, when soeuer thou shalt perceaue mine affections to be either pressed downe at anie time with the waight of sin, or to be held with vnnecessarie busines, that I maie not wander far astraie from thee after the swarme of wicked cogitations, and so ouerhastelie be deprived of thy grace, without which I shall not be able to enioie thy freendship.

For thou art my Lord, and my
b Matt. 4, 10 God ^b, which by thy word doost both heale, and sanctifie; which holdest
c Psal. 66, 9 my soule in life ^c, and sufferest not my feete to slip, but deliuerest mee from the euill daie, and from the snares of death.

Oah, how manie haue bin cast off, and vtterlie perished, that haue bin much more innocent than I am!

And therefore my soule, praise thou the Lord, and all that is within mee blesse his holie Name ^d.
d Psal. 103, 1

2 My soule, I saie, praise thou the Lord, and forget not all his benefits.

It is all too little, and far vn sufficient whatsoeuer thou shalt either thinke, or speake, or promise to his praise.

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praise. For hee exceedeth all praise,
and is much sweeter than anie mu-
sick.

Wherefore my soule cleaueth to
thee alone, and loueth thee aboue
all other gifts, notwithstanding it be
exceedinglie beutifull and sweete
which of meere good will thou hast
sent vnto mee.

For thou alone art the spouse ^e, ^e Matt. 9, 15
as for all things else theie are gifts,
and arguments of loue.

In steed of thee I will not loue
them; neither will I beleue that
anie thing, or all things in the world
can suffice mee, if I haue not thee:
for in so dooing, I maie perchance
forgoe thee with them too.

Thou giuest me leaue to vse manie
things for thy sake; but I maie not
enioie so much as one thing in thy
steed ^f. ^f Exod. 10, 3

And therefore, O Christ my sweete
spouse, I haue preferred thee afore
all other things, and my care hath
bin aboue all things to loue thee.

Wherefore, grant that blessedlie
I maie enioie thee, and in that vnion
euerlastingly to triumph in happi-
nes together with thee.

But how far am I come? I haue

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lengthened my speech more than perhaps you would. But pardon me, good freend. For I haue bin carried aloft through the loue of mine especiall, and onlie freend; and would to God it would please him still to lift vp both mee and you too in contemplation!

Let him prouide an heauenlie ascension, but let vs not keepe a base going downe.

M. Aske you mee, whether I am forsaken at anie time of my beloued?

S. Yea, I saie so.

M. But how doo you behaue your selfe in trooble?

S. I take all things as patientlie as I can, expecting his comming.

Naturalie I am griued, but as touching my spirit, I haue inward patience; that my griefe prooue not incurable. For I forget not, how hee that loueth, liueth in paine.

1 Rom. 1. 17 I liue by faith; I beleue the holie Scriptures; I giue credit to the words of comfort. And although I endure affliction: yet I doubt not, neither in deede ought I to doubt, but that God (when it pleaseth him) can send mee ease.

For true, and to be credited are those

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those woordes which are declared. Because the verie sancts themselues haue bin exercised in manie, and proued in like things ^h.

^h Hebr. 11, 4
5
6, &c.

Nature continuallie dooth wish for quietnes, and seeketh to be comforted in some thing: but the spirit notwithstanding is readie to sustaine whatsoeuer the wil of God is I should endure ⁱ.

ⁱ Mar. 14, 38

If therefore I shall be lesse zelous, and lesse willing to doo good, my punishment shall be the more greuous. *Though he slaie me, saith the wiseman ^k, yet will I trust in him.*

^k Iob. 13, 15

If I loue virtues, patience is a great virtue: therefore let patience euer more bee retained. For the more praise we purchase, the more paines we take in bringing things to passe.

And that our virtue maie be proued, and made the more glorious, we are commonlie exercised by contrarie euent.

Therefore whensoeuer anie such triall shal happen, be not out of hart, neither fall downe; but reteine thou patience, and extoll the righteousness of God. The Lord is not so hard and pittilesse, that he can suffer you to abide long vncomforted.

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Onlie haue a care, that you neither lament immoderatlie, nor yet murmur against the righteous and iust God, because you are forsaken ¹,
 11. Cor. 10, ^{verse} 10 least the wicked spirit doo send vnto you more greuous tentations of your faith, whereby being ouersearefull, you shall extreemeli bee afflicted.

Wherefore beare a little, and suppress your sorowe, although the griefe both of your hart and bodie be neuer so great.

Abide constant in that good purpose, which at the first you intended to keepe. For it is good, especiallie at such an extremitie, to cast all confidence vpon the beloued.

Looke thou patientlie for God his heauenlie comfort, so shall you speedeli perceau a speciall fauor, and sight of God.

Lo, you haue a faithfull witnesse,
 Psal. 40, 1 ^m I waited patientlie for the Lord, and hee inclined vnto mee, and heard my crie.

And that in your neede you maie finde the like fauor, I doo wish you both earnestlie to praie your selfe, and desire others to praie for you also, and so commit your selfe wholie

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and is priuie vnto the things to come? Euen I, the Lord, which haue doon all things in meature, number, and weight ^f.

I am the creator both of heauen and earth ^s; the ruler of this world ^h; the knower of hidden things ⁱ; the reuealer of secrets ^k; the poſſeſſor of the whole world ^l, and the beholder of the cauſes of all particulars.

I am God, and change not ^m, who haue continuallie with me the cauſes of all changes in the world.

I am God the almightie ⁿ, whose power is inuincible ^o; I am God the moſt high ^p, whose highnes can not bee attained ^q; I am God, the moſt righteous ^r, whose beeing can not be conceaued ^s.

I am for my preſence euerie-where ^t, and yet no where to be ſeene ^u.

I am the moſt ſpirituall, and fartheſt from the ſenſes of man ^x.

I beare all things, yet neuer burdened ^y, and I fill and rule each place, and yet vnſtretched.

I behold both things paſt, and things to come alike, as though theie were preſent ^z.

I ſurpaſſe all creatures both ſpirituall

f Wiſ. 11, 17

s Iſai. 42, 5

h 1. Tim. 1,

verſe 17

i Reuel. 3, 15

Ecclus. 42,

verſe 20

k Mat. 10, 26

l Pſal. 50, 12

m Mal. 3, 6

n Gen. 35, 11

Reuel. 4, 8

Reue. 11, 17

o Rom. 9, 19

p Iſai. 14, 14

q Pſal. 139, 7

8, &c.

r Mat. 19, 17

s Iob. 11, 7

8, &c.

t Pſal. 139, 7

8

u Iob. 23, 8

9

x Iohn. 1, 18

y Hebr. 1, 3

z Wiſd. 8, 8

Ecclus. 42, 19

1
5
9
5

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a Psal. 35, 10 tuall, and corporall ^a.

I am diuerſlie to be named: yet no thought is able to conceaue mee as I am.

I ſhewe my ſelfe ſuddenlie, and forth-with when one would little thinke, I am gone againe.

b 1. Tim. 6, ^b I am in deeſe the inuiſible God ^b,
verſe 16 which after a thouſand waies declare my preſence to my friends.

And thus I ſpake vnto the louing ſoule:

I will hide my face for a little ſeaſon, I will forſake her for a while, to ſee if her loue be pure, and vnſained.

It is a great matter to loue vnſainedlie. For that is to loue mee neither for her owne ſake, nor for anie temporall commoditie, or ſpirituall comfort; but to loue mee, and mee **c** Mat. 4, 10 onlie ^c, and that for mine owne ſake, and that to the end, and that in hope of nothing at mine hands.

It is not in euerie one thus to loue mee; but this prerogatiue of pure louing, is properlie to the perfect ſoule.

But ſhe that is yet vnperfect, hath great neede often to be prooued, and exerciſed, that ſhe maie know both
how

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how much she loueth mee, and how greatlie she despiseth her selfe.

For you said in your hart: Trulie I doo loue (Christ,) yea, and often you repeate the same thing, I loue him in deece.

But I credit not woords, or thoughts onlie. For I will make due triall of that loue.

When I am present, and speake faire; when I either put, or encrease good motions in the minde; when I grante prosperitie most commonlie or pleasure, then can you saie with all deuoutnes, *O my beloved, I doo loue you.* And you saie well. For I am greatlie to be loued, and you are at no time either to thinke, or speake otherwise than freendlie, and honorable of mee.

But for prosperitie, and good turnes onlie to loue, and to commend mee, what great thing is it? Because euen finners doo the same. For when theie haue receiued what naughtelie theie craued, theie oftentimes blesse mee for the same. But praise is not seemelie in the mouth of the sinner ^d.

^d Ecclus. 15.

He therefore which either for some verse profit, or comfort receaued, dooth loue me, dooth no more than a co-

uetous

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uetous man dooth. But exceede him,
I saie, exceede him, and proceede
vnto greater righteousnes.

Be ashamed still to be weake and
tender; learne to eate mans meate,
bee not still fed with the milke of
children.

Attaine thou to the companie of
the stout Dauids, that can hold both
speare, and sword, and shield,

Take vp the crosse, and folowe
Luk. 9, 23 mee.

Make haste to be in the number
of them, which haue learned to
beare diuers afflictions, and much
banishment for my name sake. You
are too much giuen vnto ease.

I purpose to trie you, and to turne
vnto the other side, that you maie
knowe what you can suffer, least you
seeme ouer innocent and holie in
your owne conceipt.

Tribulation, and anger, and mine
heauie displeasure, together with
foretentations of wicked spirits, shall
come vpon you. Some vniustlie shall
spoil you of your goodes; others
shall take no compassion vpon you;
others shall defame; others shall re-
siste; others shall overcharge; o-
thers shall carrie you perforce whe-
ther

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ther you would not goe; some outwardlie, others inwardlie, shall trouble you. Some shall be aduanced vnto hie degree, and honor, but you shall be left vnto reproches, and endure seruile paines. In all these, yea and in greater things you shall be preoued, whether you are a valiant soldior of mine, or no.

I will depart, and not giue ouer, vntill I haue made sufficient triall, whether you blesse mee to my face.

Now if I finde, that from the hart vnfainedlie you doo loue mee, and continuallie doo praise my name, then is it meete that from thenceforth I call you Spouse, and that you shall haue a secret chamber with mee.

But if I perceiue that you cannot beare my correction, but will iudge my punishment to be ouer-sharp, and still bewaile mine absence, wishing for mee with hartie and earnest desire, I will sende you my staffe, that you maie arise thereby, and afterward my selfe will come, and restore you againe vnto my wonted fauor. For it is not my will that you should vtterlie faint; because him that loveth mee, I will loue to the ende.

f Iohn. 13, 1

And

The fourth booke

And although your loue be not so perfect as could be wished; yet I will not despise you, but prouide that you maie growe on in louing. For my care is that you doo well; and therefore mistrust mee not.

I knowe what you can endure, which maketh mee to temper my course, that you be not tempted aboue your strength, and so faint.

And if I staie, in your opinion, some-what too long, looke for mee vntill the daie of my visitation. For comming I will come, and performe my promise.

Bee you still in praier, still meditating vpon the holie scripture, and alwaie be patient, and suffer.

I am not ignorant but your grieve will be much: but so quicklie to be ouerthrowen, and to bee out of all hope of my returne, I cannot like that.

Where is your faith? A great faith you had neede of especiallie on this behalfe: for although you see not mee, yet are you seene of mee, ⁸ Ecclus. 23 into whose hands you are to commend both your selfe, and all that you haue. ^{verse 19}

For although you are not priuie

of the Imitation of Christ.

to my iudgements: yet hauing a strong faith, you must of necessitie ^h Psalm. 119, saie ^h, *Righteous art thou, o Lord, and* ^{verse} 137 *just are thy iudgements.*

So then be of good comfort, for this affliction is not to your destruction, but for the glorie of God.

I denied your petition, because I would haue due prooffe of your faith and loue.

For all this I did that you should well vnderstand both your owne weakenes, and my goodnes ¹.

¹ Psa. 119, 67

I knowe what you are ^k better than your selfe dooth. Yea, I haue knowen you thoroughlie, not of late, but from euerlasting ¹.

71

^k Psalm. 7, 9¹ Wisd. 8, 8

Wherefore acknowledge the benefit which you haue by mee; behold how miserable you should bee, if once I forsake you.

As yet you haue not profited sufficientlie in the knowledge of your selfe. And because it is verie expedient that you haue that knowledge, my will was that by experience you should attaine thereunto.

It is verie good for you to be forsaken, to be troobled, to be humbled sometime, that so the better you maie euen sensiblie perceauie your owne

The fourth booke

^m P^{sa}. 119, owne weakenes ^m.
 verse 71 I knowe right well this will make
 you a good discip^{le} of mine. And
 what, I praie you, haue you lost, if
 heereby you prooue more wise and
 watchfull?

Oftentimes you are too arrogant,
 and forgetfull of your selfe, thinking
 that goodnes to be within you which
 is not; selfe-loue doth deceaue you,
 and while you thinke not of the gi-
 uer, you doo abuse the gift. I made
 you drunke; but you forgot how the
 grape did growe vpon mine owne
 vine.

Trie your selfe a little, acknowledge
 your strength. If that which you had
 came of your selfe, whie did you not
 holde it? But if you could not hold
 it, confesse that you receaued it from
 aboute ⁿ. And therefore ascribe all
 the honor to the mercie of God, and
 openlie confesse, how without mee
ⁿ 1. Cor. 4, 7 you can doo nothing ⁿ.
 1. Iam. 1, 17
 1. Ioh. 15, 5

Consider both in what steede I
 stand you, and how able also I am to
 confirme you in all goodnes.

Where were you before I called
 you, but weltering in sin and wicked-
 nes? And now how would you wan-
 der, if I directed you not? Yea, and
 when

of the Imitation of Christ.

when also went it well with you, if
you had not my fauor ?

And I said, At no time, sweete S.
Lord. Thou alone, art my singular
good freend, in all things, and aboue
all most faithfull.

Whie then did you purpose so L.
wickedlie with your selfe, to go after
strange louers ?

What misliked you in mee; was
it either my maiestie, or my bewtie ?

Ah Lord, there is none compa- S.
rable to thee either for bewtie, or
for glorie, or for riches, or for aucto-
ritie; neither in heauen nor in earth
is anie like vnto thee P. For thou on-
lie art most hie ouer all creatures.

P 1. King. 8,
verse 23

The heauens are thine, the earth
also is thine; thou hast laide the
foundation of the world, and all that
therein is.

1 Psal. 89, 11

Much it is that thou hast imparted
vpon thy creatures, by which, thy
bewtie, wisdome, and goodnes doth
appeere: but yet in comparison of
thy blessed, and glorious presence,
it is nothing. So that by experience
I haue learned now, that I cannot
lack thy companie one houre to-
gether, but with much grieve to my
soule.

1 Rom. 1, 20

Returne

The fourth booke

L. Returne therefore vnto mee; thou
haſt hetherto wandered enough
about.

Let not hence-forth to be more
ſtaied, and milde, and faithfull, yea
and to truſt in mee, not onlie in the
daie of my gracious viſitation, but
much more in the night of tenta-
tion.

I haue let you ſlip, that beeing
weariſh, you might returne vnto
mee the more ſpeedelie, and beeing
frustrate of outward comfort, at
length vnderſtand how much you
are bound vnto mee, that ſo often
haue called vnto you.

And therefore liſten now at the
laſt, for it is not without cauſe that
ſometime you are forſaken; that you
are cold ſometime in zeale; that it
ſirketh you; that you are ouer-wea-
ried with tentarions; that on all
ſides you are afflicted; that you can
neither finde anie counſaile, nor
feele comfort, but are enforced to
endure anguiſh and miſerie at all
times, and in all places.

I am abſent, to the end you may
knowe how needfull it is that I bee
preſent with you, not onlie in one
matter, or in a ſpeciall cauſe, but in
euerie

of the Imitation of Chriſt.

euerie action, in all places and times, ſo well earlie as late, whereſoeuer you ſhall become, goe, or ſtand.

For this will teach you to walke warelic with your freend; to abſteine from vanities; and to take heede of offenses ^r.

^rMich. 6, 8

I doo leaue you, that you maie well vnderſtand how much you are bound to loue mee, that is, that you maie ſee a manner how to loue mee in deede.

It is verie true you thought your ſelfe more ſtout, and happie, than in truth you were; but when I did once withdraw mine aide from you a litle, it then appeered to the world how you were verie poore, and miſerable ^r.

^rReuel. 3, 17

How ſhall your loue be knowen, vnleſſe you beare my yoake with patience?

Sometime I ſee you to waxe ſlugiſh, and therefore I doo hide my ſelfe for an houre, like a freend ſtanding behinde the wall ^a, that you maie be ſtirred vp the more zelouſlie to ſeek me.

^aSal. 3, 2, 9

I knowe for my part, and I ſee all things ^x: but troublous trials (which are good for manie cauſes) doo make

^rEcclus. 43.

verſe 19

30

H I

you

The fourth booke

you the more heedie and wise in all
your actions 7.

7 Isai. 28, 19

Moreouer, if you loue mee, you
will not waxe the more sluggish in
seeking mee for all this; if you like
mee, you will seeke mee.

8 Luk. 15, 19

What? Wor you not, how riches
painfullie come by, are kept most
carefullie? Who so wisheth rest, as
the wearied man? Who loueth so
kindlie, as hee which hath sighed
most heauelie? And is not that iewell
which was lost, and is found againe,
much more esteemed than before it
was? So, euen so is the ioie duple,
and the mirth dabled, at the long
wished presence of the beloued.

And therefore it is much for your
profit that I withdrawe my selfe: be-
cause I doo it, not for anie ill will
to you-wards, but vpon verie good
cause; so do I dallie with my freends.

Let it suffice you at this time, that
you haue bin in my fauor to heare so
much at my mouth.

9 Math. 7, 7

Besides, when you haue neede,
returne vnto mee, and feare not.
For I neuer shut mine eares against
that person which humblie and ear-
nestlie crieth for mine assistance.

of the Imitation of Christ.

CHAP. 18.

1. The confidence of a true Christi.

an. 2. God iustificeth the vngodlie.

3. giueth whatsoever good is to

man. 4. will haue no man to

despeire, 5. but that all

sinners should flie

vnto his mer-

cie.

*Y Lord God will**helpe mee, therefore shall**I not be confounded ^a.*^a Isai. 50. 7*Let it grieue no bo-**S.**die, though I loue*

much to speake with my Lord God,
whose goodnes hath allured, and
inflamed mee both to praie, and to
meditate in such sort, that me thinks
I should be too hard and vnkinde,
if I made none answer vnto his
woords.

But happelic some one will saie
against mee, Therefore neither doo
you feare God, seeing you are a foule
sinner, vnworthie euen to liue in this
world.

Whence is it, that you dare so pre-
sume in your hart? And, being the
least, and vilest of all others, with

The fourth booke

what face can you thrust forth your
selfe so to talke with your Lord

^a Ecclus. 15, God ^a? Whome doo you make your
verse 9 selfe?

Iohn. 9, 13 Oah, my louing Lord, 'doo thou
answere on my behalfe. For the
mouth of the wicked is opened vpon

^b Psal. 109, 2 mee ^b.

If I would iustifie my selfe, mine
^c Job. 9, 20 owne mouth shall condemne mee ^c.
And though I were cleane, yet did
not my soule knowe so much.

Oah, Lord, thou knowest my fol-
lie, and my shamefastnes. Speake
thou on my behalfe, and I full glad-
lie will keepe silence.

L. Giue thou none heede to the
words of the wicked: but rather doe
thou remember how I haue saide,
I came not to call the righteous, but the

^d Mark. 2, 17 *sinners vnto repentance* ^d.

^e Mat. 28, 17 Am not I to doo what I will ^e?

Mark. 17, 2 Who maie resist my pleasure?

Hebr. 2, 8 If I thinke it good to shoue fauour
to thee-ward, though little thou de-
serue the same at mine hands, who

^f Rom. 8, 33 shall reprocue me therefore ^f?

34 Hee that is without sin, let him

^g Iohn. 8, 7 throwe the first stone at thee ^g. But
if theie, all the pack of them are sin-
ners, with what face can theie finde
faul-

of the Imitation of Christ.

your fault with my fauor to thee-ward :

You haue not chosen mee ^h, but ^h Ioh. 15, 16
my mercie did preuent you.

Dareth anie yet murmure against
you for comming vnto me? Comfort
thy selfe, his murmure is not against
thee, but flatlie against my person,
because it is I that receaue ⁱ, and
eate with sinners ^k.

1. Tim. 1, 15

k Matt. 9, 11

12

13

And whie ought you not to cha-
lenge mine acquaintance, the which
reioice to offer rather than to with-
drawe from anie one?

Oah gracious Lord, laie not this ^S.
sin to their charge, but to mee, and to
my sins.

I cannot denie, but deseruedlie
theie conceaue ill of mee; yea I doo
openlie acknowledge this withall,
that I am much more wicked than
anie man dooth knowe.

You doo well thus to humble your
selfe. For in so dooing, you shall euer
gaine, and more easelie obteine my
fauor.

Notwithstanding, I will not there-
fore cast you awaie, because you are
sinner, and faultie, albeit that should
make you both to thinke baselie of
your selfe, and alwaie to haue in mind
what great sins you are polluted
withall.

The fourth booke

withall.

But that you perish not through desperation, consider howe manie righteous men I haue made of sin-

ners^l, freendes of enimies, choosing the humble, and refusing the proude^m.

I haue no neede of anie gift of thineⁿ: onlie this I require at your hands, namelie, that you loue mee with a pure hart^o, and I am satisfied.

I am cleane dashed, for, alas, there is nought within mee to stir vp your loue thus to mee-ward.

I doo neither respect, nor require the things that this world dooth offer to get fauor withall; if you doo loue, and that your loue be feruent, and constant, it is all that I aske.

But, I praie thee, whose are the things that doo, or maie adorne a man? Are not all things mine, whatsoever doo glitter either in the bodie, or minde^p?

As for that of the world, and which set out the bodie, theie ought litle to trouble your minde. But the things which belong to the beutifeng of virtue, it standeth you vpon to seeke, that you maie please the Lord in the light

light of the liuing.

Howbeit, you haue well doon in humbling, and accusing your selfe so well outwardlie as inwardlie before the face of my maiestie, by confessing vnfaignedlie your great weakenes, and wickednes, and by fetching deep sighes, for that you are verie vnwor-thie to challenge the fauor of my fa-miliaritie euen but one houre, bee-ing, as I am a glasse pure without spot¹, and you are a great sinner, and vncleane euen from your infancie².

¹ Wisd. 7, 26

² Gene. 8, 21

And therefore be euer mindfull both of your fraile condition, and of my glorious maiestie, and so with humble reuerence approach boldlie into my presence.

For I am hee that putteth awaie thine iniquities, and will not remem-ber thy sins³; it is I that iustifie the vngodlie⁴, and this I doo for mine holie name sake; yea and I am still readie to minister greater gifts of mercie vnto thee.

³ Isai. 43, 25

⁴ Rom. 4, 5

Because I doo euer choose to shoue fauor rather than displeasure, as one who had rather spare than punish.

Yea, all this seemeth but little in mine eies, neither am I so content with the first grace that I will not add

The fourth booke

a second, or a third rather, yea, in verie deede, as I can set none ende
"Psa. 145, 9 to my mercies": so neither can the
number of my gifts and benefits bee
"Psa. 68, 19 recited".

Last of all, after that I for my part haue pardoned sins, and men for their partes by their goodnes haue testified to the world their vnfeined repentance, then doo I restore for the most part the comfort of mine healthfull countenance, by powring in most plentifull manner the grace of mine holie Spirit.

And although a sinner doo abide still in the flesh: yet doo I receaue him into my familiaritie, so that he is not to feare the vtter confusion for sins committed: but rather to thanke and praise God, that old things bee passed awaie, and that all things are
"2. Cor. 5, 17 become newe".

So gracious, and mercifull am I, that alwaies I am more readie to forgiue, than thou art to beg forgiuenes at mine hands; more readie to giue, than thou art to aske.

Therefore whie feare you? What dismaieth you to approch vnto the side of such fauor? And whie doo you estrange your selfe from so greate kindenes

of the Imitation of Christ.

kindenes offered vnto you so franck-
lie of mine owne accord ?

Doubtlesse, though you did cer-
tainlie vnderstand that I were pur-
posed to giue you the deniall: yet
ought you not to desist from praier,
nor yet to be out of all hope of being
heard; but so much the more ear-
nestlie to be instant in crieng, vntill
you were heard.

For my mercies are infinite, and
what I denie at one time, maie bee
granted fauorable at another.

How knowe you whether I will
turne my face vnto you, and grant
you the desire of your hart ?

And what saith the Prophet con-
cerning mee ? Approch vnto him,
and be illightened, so shall not your
faces be confounded.

Wherefore accuse your slowe com-
ming vnto mee rather than your of-
ten approching; and rather your
fearefull shamefastnes than your
prompt presuming of forgiuenes.

To hope well of my goodnes, is a
verie token of true humilitie, and of
a great faith.

This doo I speake, that you maie
not offend; and that when you doo
offend, you despeire not, but rise
h 5 againe

The fourth booke

again with speede. For yet you haue hope, and an aduocate with the Father ^{1. Iohn. 2, 1} ther ².

What? Looke you to be all wor-
thie before you make accesse vnto
mee? And of your selfe when will
you be so?

If onlie such as are good and wor-
thie, and great, and perfect, should
approch vnto mee, to whome should
sinners and publicans approach?

So then, what saith the Gospell?
*There resorted vnto him publicans, and
sinners to heare him* ².
^{1. Luke. 15, 1}

Therefore let the vnwoorthie ap-
proch, that theie maie become wor-
thie; let the wicked approach, that
theie maie be made good; let the
weake and vnperfect approach, that
theie maie prooue strong and per-
fect; yet let all and euerie one ap-
proch, that theie maie receaue from
the abundant streames of the well of
life ^b. I am the well of life, that can
not be drawen drie.
^{b Ioh. 4, 14}

He which is a thirst, let him come
vnto me, and drinke ^c. And he which
hath nothing, let him come and buie
without siluer, and without monie ^d.
^{1. Iohn. 7, 37} ^{1. Isai. 55, 1}

Hee that is sick, let him come to be
healed ^e. Hee that is neither hot nor
cold,
^{e Math. 9, 12}

of the Imitation of Christ.

cold, let him come to be inflamed ^f. ^f Mar. 9, 24

Hee that is fearefull, let him come to be encouraged; hee that is sorowfull, let him come to be comforted.

Hee that is withered, let him come to be fatted; hee that is wearied with cares, let him come to be refreshed with ioie.

Lo, my delite is to be with the children of men ^g.

^g Rom. 8, 31

Hee that desireth wisdome, let him come vnto my lessons ^h.

^h Psal. 119, 9

Hee that seeketh riches, let him come to receaue those which are eternall, and vncorruptible ⁱ.

24

ⁱ Math. 6, 19

20

Hee that hunteth for honor, let him come to get an euerlasting name in the inheritance of heauen; hee that wisheth for felicitie, let him come, and hee shall taste the soueraigne, eternall, and infinite happines ^k.

^k 1. Cor. 2, 9

I, euen I it is which giue all temporall good things ^l, yea and besides that, I giue eternall riches in the heauens ^m. And what I promise I will performe, at such time as my commandements are duly obserued.

^l 1. Tim. 1, 17

^m Rom. 6, 23

And hee then shall be crowned gloriouslie in heauen, that hath foughten couragiously in this world ⁿ.

ⁿ 2. Tim. 2,

verse 11

12

CHAP.

CHAP. 19.

1. The desire of a Christian Soule is
neuer satisfied, till God bee enioied.
2. No comfort anie whit com-
parable to the spirituall
ioie.

^a Psal. 19, 14



*Et the meditation
of mine hart bee accep-
table in thy sight ^a.*

What can bee more
comfortable : What
more ioiesfull to the faithfull Soule,
than still deuoutlie to meditate vpon
her Lord God ; that whome she can-
not as yet behold in a cleere, and
blessed sight, at the least she maie, as
it were, make him present by earnest
calling him into minde ?

^b 1 Cor. 13, 12 Therefore let her behold him as
in a glasse darkelie ^b, whome she is
not to see face vnto face.

And albe she maie not haue a full
sight of him in his maiestie : yet let
her search for him by types in the
Scriptures.

Oah that the care to seeke the
face of the Lord did neuer waxe cold
within me, but dailie more and more
encreased !

Howbeit,

of the Imitation of Christ.

Howbeit, the soule that loueth God, hath a wonderfull desire to enioie the sight of God. For to see him is happines in deed, and the absolute felicitie ^c.

^c Reue. 22, 4

Wherefore she desireth this blessednes, that, her whole appetite ha- uing attained her ende, she maie be satisfied, and at quiet, for nothing in the world is able to content her ^d.

^d Eccles. 1, 8

For long experience hath taught her, that the more she estraieeth from celestiall happines, the more vnhappy and vnquiet she is, inasmuch as in this world nothing is permanent, or durable ^e, that maie assuage the heate of her affection.

^e 1. Cor. 7, 31

1. Iohn. 2, 15

16

17

So then let her make returne vnto him that made her ^f, and let her desire to be blessed of him, who at the firste created her.

^f Gen. 1, 26

27

Wisd. 2, 23

For doubtlesse, he that made the soule, must satisfice the soule with good things ^g. Because, such a desire hath he instilled into her, that hee beeing gon, nothing will content her; nor anie ioie comfort her greatlie.

^g Psal. 103, 5

And therefore, soule of mine, stand not heere still, for this is no place of rest for thee: but mount aloft, as-
cende

cende

The fourth booke

cende vnto him that made thee. For he hath now sent his messengers, and biddeth thee to ascend.

So manie desires of eternall life as he inspireth, so manie messengers he dooth sende. Which beeing entertained, prepare thy selfe to the iornie.

Then goest thou on, when thou desirest to see him; when thou laborest to please him; when thou renouncest this world; when thou doost, whatsoeuer thou doost, euen of pure loue to him-ward.

For had he not first sought thee, and powred holie cogitations into thy brest, thou couldest neuer seeke him^h.

^h Iohn. 6, 44

For that soule dooth languish not for loue, but through wearines, which is not inlightened with the beames of the eternall Sonneⁱ.

ⁱ Iohn. 1, 5

But, if through the sweete blastes of the Southren winde her frosen coldnes, and sorowe be once resolued, then by reason of the light inspired, and incomprehensible diuinitie, she beginneth to sweat through the hotnes of loue.

Oah infinite heate of the true Sonne, what boilings doost thou cause then within the hart of the louer?

of the Imitation of Christ.

louer? Thou dissoluest the darkenes
of a sorowfull minde, and bringest
the laborfome toile vnto nothing.
The long time and daies of pouertie
thou doost comfort and that abun-
dantlie, with one simple beame of
thy glorious light.

O salue of the sorowfull ^k! O shi- ^k Matt. 9, 13
ning light of such as wander and
seeke!

Shine thou continuallie vpon me;
prepare thou a mansion place within
me, euen till thine euerlasting light
doo appeere.

Oah how sweete, and how comfor-
table will thy presence bee, seeing
euen of a little remembrance, so vn-
speakeable ioie dooth arise!

Howe gladlie can I turne vnto
thee; how frankelie doo I renounce
euen this world, that I maie be com-
forted with thine heauenlie fauor!

For it will be none hard matter
for the soule which longeth for the
sight of thy countenance, to bereaue
her selfe of all outward pleasure,
when she shall either feele nowe a
greater in the minde, or verie short-
lie expect with a perfect faith for
the same.

Furthermore, none is to be so foo-
lish

The fourth booke

lish as to thinke, that thou wilt leaue the deuout soule anie long while vncomforted; or that the gifts of thy fauor which she is to receaue for all her conquests ouer nature, shall be small; for no earthlie comfort, whatsoever it bee, or whence soeuer it arise, is anie whit comparable either in the qualitie, or quantitie of sweetnesses to the heauenlie ioie.

And therefore labor thou, o faithfull soule, to shoue thy selfe such toward thine heauenlie spouse Christ, that hee maie continuallie be gracious and fauorable vnto thee; for through him and in him you shall in most abundant manner finde that, which exceedingly shall minister comfort vnto you in all extremities.

The oftener you haue accessse vnto him, and the nigher you doo approach vnto his side, the sweeter hee will appeere, and the more amiable in your eies.

But if you withdrawe your selfe, then the losse wil be your owne; and he abiding in his beutie, shall feelee neither grieve nor trooble.

You stand in neede of his, but he of no mans goodnes.

So that you maie become blessed through

of the Imitation of Christ.

through him, but so cannot hee by your proceeding.

Hee alone sufficeth himselfe; hee alone can neither bee augmented, nor diminished.

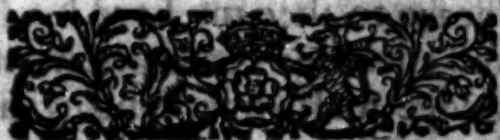
Through his goodnes all things are, whatsoeuer bee, whether theie haue life, sense, or vnderstanding ¹. 1 Act. 17, 28

And therefore iust it is that all creatures euerlastingly should blesse him ^m. = Psa. 150, 6

Oah, how gladlie would I discourse and speake of him vnto thee, if I were able sufficientlie so to doo!

But what ^s He neither is, nor maie be vttered. Againe, as he cannot be vttered by meanes, so can he not be conceaued in minde.

Which being so, thinke notwithstanding of thy Creator so well as man maie, taking the remembrance of his abundant sweetnes for a comfort, vntill such time as hee reuealeth the sight of his owne countenance vnto thee in the heauens ⁿ. = Reue. 22, 4



CHAP. 20.

1. A complaint of the Soule for the want of her blessed state. 2. *What* weeping pleaseth God. 3. Who trulie blessed. 4. A description of God.

^aPsal. 31, 22



Said in mine hart
I am cast out of thie sight ^a.

Mine hart is wounded within me, throghe the long differring of thy glorie.

I will speake therefore, and reason with my griued Soule. The great zeale of loue compelleth mee to speake, and suffereth nothing to be concealed from thee.

What then shall I saie? Lo my God, in peace is my most bitter bitterness.

Hee that is ignorant, wotteth not the meaning heereof. But it is not so with mee. I knowe, and I vnderstand it, and therefore I am not ashamed to sing with the Prophet.

I speake to thee my Lord ^b, who knowest all things ^c; and giuest both knowledge and vnderstanding according to thy good pleasure, that
neither

^bPsal. 38, 15

^cReue. 3, 15

Ecclus. 42,

verse 20

of the Imitation of Christ.

neither I maie glorie more than is meete I should, nor the foole aduance mee, when in truth I am simple.

I maie confesse then what I haue receaued from thee. And yet what neede haue I to tell you thereof, when as you are neither ignorant, nor can take anie pleasure of the same.

Againe, what comfort can come vnto you, which art the comfort of the comfortlesse?

So that the profit is mine, which doo lack the consolation of weords, thereby to stir vp mine affection to thee-ward, and to finde some ease for my desolate soule.

For, seeing I maie not behold thy presence, I will bewaile thine absence; because euen this is a token of loue, and a great pleasure to the louing soule.

Now then the sense of this sentence appeareth. Because it is rightlie said of the louing soule, how, the more feruentlie she loueth, and the more earnestlie she longeth after eternall things, the more trulie she feeleth the power thereof working within her.

Theie

The fourth booke

There are not cold woords, but to the vnkinde soule; neither deafe organs, but to the hardened hart.

The louing and zelous soule knoweth this well; and is so often inflamed in hart, as she is pricked with the desire of eternall peace.

And therefore shee speaketh to thee her Lord God, not to men, of whome she would not be knownen.

And although sometime she talketh with men; yet that which theie heare is to the outward sense. But whatsoeuer she saith to thee, it is to the verie soule, and rather by sighing of the hart, than by sounding words.

Lo (saith she) in peace is my most bitter bitternes. As if she said; After that of thy goodnes I returned vnto the peace of minde, the transitorie state of the world began to be still more grieuous vnto mee. For I see in this peace, how far I am separated from the soueraigne peace.

And in deede beeing first busied with earthlie desires, and moued with diuers passions, I was greatlie hindered from spiritvall cogitations, and so from heauenlie contemplation, after which I should haue much longed: but that could I least
of

of the Imitation of Christ.

of all doo, because through sloth-
fulnes I did forgo all sense of inward
sorowe.

But nowe seeing the troobles of
idle thoughts are taken awaie, I doo
somewhat rest in the peace of con-
science, and am drawen vnto hea-
uenlic matters with mine whole
hart, and I do more lament, that I do
not enioie the good things of God,
than erst I did moorne being vexed
with the troobles of this world.

So that it is bitternes to my soule
euen to liue in this world; and to
go vnder the heauie-burden of sin.
But it is bitterest of all, when so much
as I maie, all mine affections being
gathered together, I doo enioie now
the good things of the hart, and bend
my selfe, euen with hartie zeale to-
ward the armes of eternall peace,
and yet maie not attaine thereun-
to, because of the bonds of my mor-
tall state.

And this makes mee euen with
griefe of hart to crie vnto thee, and
to saie:

*O wretched man that I am, who shall
deliuer mee from the bodie of this death?* ^d Rom. 7, 24.

There is none so greuous a burden
vnto me, as stil to wander frō thee by
liuing

The fourth booke

liuing in the world; for laboring in loue, I wish for no comfort beside thee.

For by good experience I haue long sithence learned, that my soule can neither be satisfied with the good things of this world ^e, nor yet be blessed vntill she be ioined vnto thee in the celestially habitation.

For as exceedinglie she doth loue, burne, and vse contemplation while she is in the bodie: so will her desire be insatiable vntill the bodie be laide off.

And therefore her ende must be made perfect by attaining the soueraigne felicitie, and the light of thy countenance ^f.

^f Reuel. 22, 4

^g 1. Tim. 6, 16

Reuel. 1, 5

Reuel. 17, 14

^h Psal. 16, 11

ⁱ Psal. 41, 2

^j Psal. 16, 11

^k Psal. 16, 11

^l Psal. 16, 11

^m Psal. 16, 11

ⁿ Psal. 16, 11

^o Psal. 16, 11

^p Psal. 16, 11

^q Psal. 16, 11

^r Psal. 16, 11

^s Psal. 16, 11

^t Psal. 16, 11

^u Psal. 16, 11

^v Psal. 16, 11

^w Psal. 16, 11

O King of heauen ^g, so amiable in all respects; O my all louelie beloved, even wholie to be desired, when wilt thou fill mee with the light of thy countenance ^h; when wilt thou satisfie my longing with the well of life ⁱ;

My soule hath much thirsted after thee ^j; and greatlie will be troubled vntill she attaine thee.

Liuing in the world, and not seeing thee, I can take no comfort of whatsoeuer I beholde; so greatelie dooth

of the Imitation of Christ.

dooth zeale waxe hot, that not once,
but often I breake into these words:

When shall I come, and appeere
before the face of my God ^k;

^k Psal. 42, 2

And this loue of mine cesselth not,
but encreaseth more and more, in
such sort, that I am driven euen to
weepe night and daie, while conti-
nuallie I doo thinke with my selfe,
Where is now my God?

For it is a comfort to the louing
soule to weepe for thy sake, while she
must want her desire; and still ex-
pect thy comming.

And these teares doo more feede
and refresh the louing soule, than if
she enioied all the things of this
world. For did she loue them ^l, she
would not weepe for thee.

^l Math. 6, 24

Oah how blessed, and pleasing to
thee is the sheading of such teares!

For theie doo both kill the desires
of secular and temporall ioies; and
also theie obtaine the celestiaall con-
solation.

And therefore none doo shed such
holie teares, but theie which are
both singularlie in loue, and verie
notrablie religious.

Far of another kinde be the teares
of such as miserablie be troobled in
this

The fourth booke

this world.

For one man weepeth because he is sick; another for that he is oppressed; another because he is iniured; another because his minde is contraried: but it is thou, religious soule onlie which powrest forth teares euen of pure loue to thy Sauior-ward; as for temporall damage, and worldlie causes, theie trooble thee not, for thou submittest thy selfe to the righteous iudgement of

■ Psal. 119, God ^m, and art thankfull.

verse 137 And for so dooing, let no worldlie creature iudge thee either foolish, or impatient: because thy teares doo not greeue, but comfort; theie doo not blur the face, but wash it; theie hurt not the eies, but theie purifie the sight of the minde.

Howbeit, let others conceaue heereof as theie will, I cannot but thinke otherwise than well of you; for I doo wish to drinke deep of such teares.

S. If you wish to weepe with mee, then maie you bee comforted with mee.

Oah that your soule were as I am, you could neuer forget what I doo feele!

of the Imitation of Christ.

I knowe whome I credit; and sure I am it is a more easie thing to denie that there is anie heauen and earth, than that there is a God.

And I knowe also hee is my full happines; and that I shall neuer bee blessed vntill I haue an absolute sight of his maiestie.

^a Reue. 22, 4

Whose sight, because it is not yet granted me, nor alwaies assured me, doth make me to lamēt, inasmuch as I am deprivied of happines, wrapped in the darknes of this life, and downpeised with the waight of mine owne infirmitie^o, that I am not of power to suffer that wonderfull light, and that whatsoeuer I do think cōcerning the glorie of heauen, is so litle, and overshadowed as it were with a cloude.

^o Wisd. 9, 15

Hence it is that I dooble my complaint in steede of a song; and while theie still saie vnto mee, *Where is thy God?* my spirit is the more troobled.

^p Psal. 42, 10

For thus I thinke then, *Where is my felicitie? where is the full ioie of mine hart? where is my true peace and rest?*

Where be all the good things that are vnspeakeable, but onlie in my God? And when shall I enioie them, vnlesse I be ioined vnto him, hauing nothing betweene?

I I

Yea,

The fourth booke

Yea, when shall I there bee? I knowe not, but I beleeeue well; I doo hope well, but yet I haue not.

Whie then, where is my God, whome I loue so, and yet I see him not? Through whose loue I am so often wounded; through whose absence I am so grieued; through whose gracious visitation so refreshed sometime?

Where is my God, whome euen once to see, is to knowe all things?

Where is my God, in whome both mine hart, and my flesh doo so earnestlie desire to reioice?

Where is my God, for whose loue I suffer such paine and sorowe? His verie remembrance is sweete, but his presence is more louelie, and expelleth all sadnes from mine hart.

Where is mine hope, and my crowne? Is it not in thee my God,

91. Cor. 13, and in thy blessed countenance 9.
verse 12

Oah, shewe mee once thy glorie, and thy face, so will I cesse to complaine!

If I contende a little with thee, & blame mee not; extreeme zeale of good will hath manie woonderfull deuises.

I am driuen to expect, and moued
still

of the Imitation of Christ.

still to long; and so this ioiefull
combat dooth continue.

CHAP. 21.

1. The delaieng of the happie is pa-
tience to be borne. 2. The felicitie
of the life to come, 3. with
a Praier for the
same.



*O Lord, I haue loved
the habitation of thine
house, and the place
where thine honor dwel-
leth.*

Psal. 26, 8

How gladlie I would be with thee,
thou knowest full well o my God;
and how entirclic I desire the same,
I am not able sufficientlie to ex-
presse.

I wish it, not onlie when I am euill
at ease, but also what prosperitie
soeuer I enioie, my desire is to bee
with thee.

But how shall my longing be sa-
tisfied?

Heere it greueth mee to conti-
nue, and yet of necessitie I must,
but my desire is to be with thee, and
I maie not yet.

Phil. 1, 23

And therefore I see no remedie,

The fourth booke

but that I am with patience to endure this delaie, and to refer my wishing to thine holie will.

For what? Is it meete I should murmur, when it must be so? God forbid.

Againe, I haue the examples of manie of Gods children, which haue vsed long patience in this life*, and yet their harts were in heauen^c.

*Hebr 11, 13
14, &c.

^cColof. 3, 1 Therefore if thy will be to prolong
^amy pilgrimage, I am willing to abide, and obeie your pleasure.

^aHowbeit, that with lesse grieve I may beare my longing to be with thee, I will till that time still meditate with my selfe of that celestiaall habitation.

Yet I presume not to pierce into the least of those ioies which thou hast prepared for such as loue thee^d: but of this and that I will meditate, to the end that mine affection being pressed downe and infected oftentimes, it maie be stirred vp, and lifted into the hope of eternall blisse.

^d1. Cor. 2, 9

O that that daie had once shined, whether then had the ioies of heauen rauished mee!

How merrie at the hart should I be then, and how happie should I thinke my selfe!

How happie should I then bee,
enioi-

of the Imitation of Christ.

enioieng a continuall peace = !

• RENE. 31, 4

From thencefoorth should I make none enquirie for anie thing, seeing no secret could be hid.

But my life is spent in darkenes, and therefore no maruell, though my sight doo dazel betweene the cloudes of glorie.

Notwithstanding I will lift vp mine eyes, and though a far off, behold and salute that holie citie Ierusalem builded in the heauen euen of liuelie stones ^f, namelic of holie angels and men, replenished continuallie with praise, & mirth, and magnificng the Lord their God for euer and euer.

f RENE. 31, 10
11, &c.

Now therefore my soule, take vnto thee the wings of desire, and flie vpward, flie I saie from all bodelie senses, ascend from the visible forme of this world, vnto the holie house of God, euen vnto the newe Ierusalem, builded substantiallie in aie lasting peace, crowned with glorie and honor, and blessed with the abundance of all good things.

Lo, wonderfull and vnspeakeable are the things (of heauen) which no man either can, or maie vtter ^f.

f 1. Cor. 2, 9

No sense is able to conceaue, neither can the vnderstanding of man

The fourth booke

attaine to knowe, howe God is in his
sancties glorious, and woonderfull in
his maiestie.

Mount thou in cogitation euen
vnto the hiest things, stretch thy de-
sire into the euerlasting eternitie,

¹ Psal. 87, 3 and saie with the Prophet ^h; *Glori-
ous things are spoken of thee, o citie of
God.*

There whatsoeuer can be wished
¹ Reuel. 21, 4 of man, is had ¹; and what is once
² Reue. 7, 17 got, is kept without care ¹.

God there is beheld face to face
¹ 1. Cor. 13, 12 cleerelie ¹, trulie, continuallie, and
eternallie.

There the blessed and all glorious
¹ Reue 7, 12 Trinitie, in one vnseparable vnitie,
which of all the blessed citizens of
heauen is woorshipped, praised, and
¹ Sal. S. 1, 1 magnified ^m, is perfectlie known.

There is mine onlie and right sin-
¹ Mat. 10, 37 gularlie beloued freend ⁿ, which is
³⁸ more pretious (to mee) than all ri-
ches ⁿ, and the treasure aboue all to
²⁰ bee desired, euen my Lord Iesus
²¹

Christ ^p, the immortall spouse of the
¹ Rom. 1, 3 Church ^q, in whome are hid ^r (but
^{7, &c.} yet reuealed to the sancties) from the
¹ Eph. 5, 25 beginning of the world, the whole
^{26, &c.} treasure of wisdom and know-
ledge ^s.
¹ Reuel. 21, 0
¹ Math. 11, 25
¹ Colof. 2, 3

of the Imitation of Christ.

O how iocund are the sanctes now
before the face of the most holie,
who is the cause and spring of their
blessednes!

For there hee speaketh vnto them
not in parables, but plainlie of the
Father.

Ioh. 16, 25

Hee is their booke, euen the woord
which in the beginning was with
God, teaching all things, and per-
forming all things, so that theie want
nothing in glorie.

Iohn. 1, 1

O blessed, and everlasting glorie,
not of small remembrance, but all
happie in God his presence!

There is also the most glorious
Mother of our Sauer, and constant
virgine Marie, bewitching the whole
bestiall courts with her comelines
and bewtie, compassed and accom-
panied with troupes of virgins, as
with sweete roses, and lilies of the
valies.

Gen. 49,
verse 10

There be the angels and archan-
gels placed in order, who moste
cheerefullie sound forth the praises
of God.

Num. 24, 17
Dan. 9, 24
25

There bee the Patriarches, and
Prophets, euen theie which beeing
filled long ago with the holie Ghost,
did foretell of Christ his comming.

Isai. 7, 14
Iere. 31, 22
Psal. 132, 11
Hag. 2, 8
10
Mala. 3, 1

The fourth booke

whome nowe theie both knowe, and
 euermore confesse to be their Lord
 and Sauior, the King of kings, and
 perfect God.

There theie behold eie to eie
 their Redeemer, whome long theie
 looked for, and for whose coming
 theie longed.

There be the Lordes Apostles,
 and Disciples, those most reuerend
 and renowned Fathers, which were
 filled with holines and grace, and
 laide a strong foundation of the Ca-
 tholique faith.

There especiallie shineth that re-
 uerend man Iohn, which baptized
 our Sauior Christ, and was a spe-
 ciall friend of my Spouse.

There is Peter, and Palle, and
 Andrewe, and Philip, and Thomas,
 and Iames, and Iohn, and all the
 other Apostles and Euangelistes,
 pillars of the Church.

To keepe the faith, and to follow
 the example of these men, is the rea-
 die waie vnto euerlasting life.

Moreouer, there be the valiant
 Martyrs enriched with their proper
 blood, and euerlastingly blessed
 with Christ, whose bodies though
 theie were most cruellie fleane; yet
 could

of the Imitation of Christ.

could not their soules by anie torments be seuered from Christ.

Also, there be the noble Confessors, which contemned this present life, that theie might be in heauen.

There be the great and glorious Doctors that were so carried aloft in contemplation, of which many haue left a liuelic image of holines in their wrightings.

There be yong men and maidens, old men and children praising the name of the Lord continuallie, and ascribing the goodnes which theie had at anie time vnto his mercie.

There theie are I saie, alwaie gratefull, alwaie zelous, alwaie iocund, alwaie religious, neuer loathing, but euer louing the Lord.

Oah, howe glorious is this kingdome, where all the Sanctes doo raigne with Christ, araied with the firste roabe ^b, and be without care of the other! ^b Reue. 6, 11
Reuel. 7, 13

There theie folowe the Lambe wheresocuer hee goeth ^c, for theie cannot part; but reioicing euerlastinglie, shall ioie in the Lord. ^c Ren. 14, 4

O my Soule, muse thou vpon these things, and cast thy thoughts vpon heauenlie matters.

The fourth booke

That place in deede is an holie place, and God is in the same.

Reuel. 21, 4 There is surpassing ioie and peace^d; good things abound, and evils there be none.

Oah, if thou couldest euen a little comprehend the vnspeakeable ioies of God his sanctes, then should you finde some comfort!

For in mee you shall be sure to finde nothing but labor and sorowe, and tentations, with troobles of this world.

Oah that the giuer of supernall light^e would vouchsafe to enspire some porcion of these ioies into you, and not send you back vnto my newe withering foode, but according to the riches of his superabundant mercie, purifie and rid you of all materi- all formes, and bring you yea by force into the deepe of his eternall brightnes!

Would to God, you could carrie back from that heauenlie sanctuarie, a forme and example of true holines, which you might imitate.

For better, and more true are the examples of celestially, and strong things, than theie which are confirmed by earthlie demonstrations.

There-

of the Imitation of Christ.

Therefore grante Lord, that I maie fauor and knowe what the perfect felicitie of sanctes is, not so much by written bookes thereof, as by the holie Ghost, which teacheth of celestially secrets in such sort, as no sense of man is able to reach thereunto.

Grante also that from henceforth I maie lift vp my minde more feruentlie vnto heauenlie things; and amidst my grievous troubles, valiantlie beare the garland of patience, till the debt of flesh being paid, I maie attaine through thy mercie vnto this felicitie that I so desire.



CHAP.

The fourth booke

CHAP. 22.

I. A godlie meditation, concerning
the accesse vnto the holie of holies,
euen Iesus Christ, the king of
angels. 2. godlie petitions
for the forgiuenes
of sins.



How art my King,

O God.

Arise now my soule,
come, and enter into
the wonderfull taber-

^a Rom. 1, 3 nacle euen into the house of God.

7, &c.

^c Mat. 1, 21

^d Gal. 3, 13

^e Reu. 17, 14

^f Col. 1, 27

^g Psal. 100, 3

^h Psal. 119, 73

ⁱ 1. Pet. 1, 18

19

^j Isai. 53, 3

4, &c.

^k 1. Cor. 15,

verse 55

56, &c.

^l Matt. 4, 10

11

^m Iohn. 16, 33

ⁿ 1. Iohn. 2, 1

2

^o Reu. 19, 16

For it is meete that omitting other
things, thou with all reuerence doo
proceede to salute our Lord Iesus
Christ ^b, thy Sauior ^c, and redee-
mer ^d, which is the head of all prin-
cipalitie and power ^e; the ioye and
crowne of all sanctes; the assured
trust and certaine hope of all the
faithfull ^f.

He it is which hath made ^g, and
redeemed thee ^h; he it is which hath
for thy sake both labored ⁱ, stri-
ued ^k, and ouercome ^l.

He is thine aduocate ^m, and the
propitiation for thy sins.

He is thy comforter, thy prouider,
and thy Lord ⁿ.

He

of the Imitation of Christ.

He is thine onlie & singular freend
that feedeth among the lilies ^{o Sal. S. 2, 16}
and loueth to reſte him vpon thy ^{P Sal. S. 1, 12}
breastes P.

Who euer hath doon the like for
thee? who euer loued you ſo entirely?

Come thou vnto him; offer your
ſelfe to him; open your whole heart,
and vnfold euen your hidden ſecrets
vnto him.

For no man will better either de-
clare, or elſe reueale how you ſhould
behaue your ſelfe in this world, in the
which, things fall out ſo ſtrangelie.

Let your wiſhes and prayers be di-
rected vnto him; and in him let all
your counſailes abide.

Vaine is the hope of man ^{1 Pſal. 62, 9}; but
hee is the vpholder of peace.

Through him wee haue open ac-
ceſſe vnto the Father ^{1 Epheſ. 2, 18}; and from
him wee receaue all goodnes, and
virtue ^{1 L Cor. 1, 30}.

Whether you mourne, or whether
you reioice, make continuall re-
courſe vnto him.

Hee is the glaſſe of life; the rule
of righteousnes; the light of the
ſoule; the loue of ſhamefaſtnes; and
the ioie of a good conſcience.

If thou loueſt him, it will be none
hard

The fourth booke

hard matter for thee to despise the vane pleasures of this world; if thou louest him, all soure things will seeme sweete; all heauie things will seeme light; and that which otherwise you should mislike, you will like
 Rom. 8, 35 right well for his sake.

To be brieft, of him, and through
 Rom. 11, 36 him, and for him, are all things.

The principall ende both of all our thoughts, and of all our actions, and of our speech, and of our reading, praieng, meditating, and speculation, should be Iesus Christ.

Through him you attaine saluati-
 Gal. 3, 13 on, and euerlasting life.

For his loue you will neither feare
 Rom. 8, 35 to die, nor refuse to liue*; because
 36 you are to commit your selfe wholie
 *Phil. 1, 23 to his trust, and to prefer nothing
 before his loue, and honor.

Wherefore come neere, and giue thanks to thy Redeemer.

S. O moste sweete Iesu, aboue all things to be loued, I salute thee most religiouslie, I commend thee most highlie, and I blesse thee now and euerlastinglie with all thy crea-
 tures.

O moste renowned Iesu, howe can I praise thee as I ought? When shall

of the Imitation of Christ.

shall I thanke thee, as I am bound, in that thy mercies are so infinite to mee-ward?

Againe, whatsoeuer I giue, it is thy gift, and I receaued it from thee.

1. Cor. 4, 7

But little, or nothing it is that I haue: and can I then sacrifice of nothing?

Howbeit, accept I beseech thee, mine humble, base, and vile sacrifice; and let my gifts be ascribed to thy goodnes.

Let the quires of heauenlie angels attending about thee, sound forth thine infinite praises on my behalfe: also let the soules of the righteous repeate the same.

In the meane while what shall I doo in memorie, and praise of thy most sacred name?

Much I ought to doo, and for manie things I am greatlie bound; yet am I not able to performe the least.

And therefore I will reade of thee, O my sweete Saviour, I will write of thee; I will sing of thee; I will thinke of thee, I will speake of thee, I will worke for thee; and for thee will I suffer.

In thee will I reioice, thee will I praise,

The fourth booke

praise, thee will I magnifie, thee
will I glorifie.

As it is meete I will worship thee,
b Math. 4, 10 because thou art my God ^b, in whom
I beleeue, whome I doo loue, seeke,
and haue alwaie desired.

Giue mee some good signe, that
mine eies maie behold thy goodlie
countenance in the heauens.

Humblie I doo throwe downe my
selfe at thy feete in hart, earnestlie
with teares desiring thy fauor, that
thou wilt vouchsafe to be good vnto
mee.

Write my name in the booke of
life; and let that neuer be out-blot-
ted, which thine holie hand hath
written.

I, wretch that I am, and far infe-
rior to anie of thy sanctes, yet tru-
sting boldlie vpon the more than
excellent prerogatiue of thy mer-
cies, beseech thee, that at the least-
wise I maie be compted among the
basest and worst of thine elect.

I confesse, my life and conuersati-
on is not such, that I dare presume
anie thing of my selfe; and therefore
all mine hope and comfort is, and
resteth in the price of thy pretious
blood, wherein I doo wholie repose
my

of the Imitation of Christ.

my selfe, and deeme it requisite that I should doo so, together with all which I haue doon, offended, deserued, and omitted.

And therefore behold, most gracious Iesu, my basenes and humilitie, consider the affection of mine hart which I beate toward thee, not for my merits, but for thy mercie sake, which vouchsafest to be loued euen of the vnworthie.

In respect of mine vnworthines I am greatlie ashamed to come in thy presence; but I am drawn-on and emboldened through your wonderfull goodnes and humilitie, which hast in perfect good wil^e yeelded not onlie to become man^d, but also to suffer^e, die, and to be buried for my sake; and therefore vnto thee doo I make recourse, for I finde no goodnes in my selfe.

^e Mat. 11, 28

29

^e Rom. 5, 7

^d Iohn. 1, 14

^e Isai. 53, 3

4, &c.

Supplic that for my sake, which of my selfe I cannot performe,

Thou hast given mee a desire^f to praie vnto thee, to praise, & to blesse thee because thou art mine hope, and my portio in the land of the liuing. Al my desire is to be with thee in the kingdom of heauen; but inasmuch as my time is not yet come, I will waite

^f Phil. 1, 13

^g Psal. 143, 5

vntill

The fourth booke

untill the night approach.

In the meane while, this maie bee my comfort in the place of my pilgrimage, that I am mindfull of thy name, and of thine exceeding great loue; and that I behold thee in this life by the eyes of my faith.

To liue in this world, and yet to repose no trust in thee, O Lord, were a thing intollerable to my soule.

I doo not consent to reioyce with the world; and, that I maie not abide without ioye and comfort, I haue determined to place my ioye in thee.

1. Cor. 1, 1.
verse 31

Much and often should I goe a straie, greatly should I be tossed in cogitations; did I not receiue thee fast in my minde, and thoughts.

And forasmuch as I am unable to sound the depth of thy diuinitie, I thinke it best for mee to runne vnto the deedes and sayings of thine humanitie, because being in those cogitations, I wane not altogether from thy diuinitie.

Thanks bee to thee, good Iesu, sweete and louelie Iesu, for vouchsafing to become my brother, to take my flesh and bones vpon thee.

1. Ioh. 1, 14
Math. 1, 23

Thanks I saie to thee for entering

of the Imitation of Christ.

ring into the wombe of good Marie
thy Mother, of whose maidenlie flesh
thou tookest the holic members of
thy bodie, which thou didest vnite to
thy diuine nature.

CHAP. 23.

**A godlie Praier, and commen-
dation of our Sauier
Christ.**



NOtwithstanding I
am wicked, and guiltie
of manifold sins:
yet haue I great hope
of saluation, because
of thy suffering, and

merits: whereof, as I haue a good
minde to consider, so graunte, O my
Lord Christ, that I maie with good
leane so doo.

For who am I to approch nigh vnto
thee, vnlesse I haue licence?

I knowe mine vniworthines to ap-
peare in his presence, whome the ve-
rie angels doo worship with great re-
uerence, saieng:

Who is this that cometh out of
the wilderness of this world, so abun-
ding in pleasure?

There-

The fourth booke

Therefore, o moste blessed Sau-
our, I am far vnmeete to thinke
of thy glorie and honor, of thy
bewtie and magnificence; because I
* Ecclus. 1c, am earth and ashes ^a, yea more base
verse 9 am I then earth and ashes, because
I am sinfull, and proane vnto all
wickednes.

But thou beeing made hier than
heauen, hast the whole world vnder
thy fecte ^b, and art worthie to be
^b Mat. 28, 18
Hebr. 2, 8 praised and honored for euermore.

Howbeit of thine vnspeakeable
goodnes, which passeth all vnder-
standing, I am drawn in affection
vnto thee; because thou art the com-
fort of the comfortlesse, and vnest
most willinglie to helpe most mise-
rable sinners.

I acknowledge how I am not onlie
destitute of all comfort, especiallie
of thy fauor; but also verie vnable
to doo good vnto my selfe.

But, mercifull Iesus, wouldest
thou vouchsafe to consider my base-
nes, then should I both be aided,
and comforted most plentifulle in
this my trouble.

Therefore I see well, whensoever
I am compassed about with affliction
and tentation, I am straight-waie
and

of the Imitation of Christ.

and without feare to flie vnto thee:
for where mercie is moſte readie,
there grace is in greateſt plentie.

And when I haue a good minde to
conſider of thy moſt glorious eſtate,
and to commend thee in moſte ho-
norable manner, I muſt come forth
with a much purer affection, and
maie not goe forward with-out
the conduction of Gods heauenlie
light.

Aſſuredlie, he ſhall haue no glo-
rie, but ſhame, that preſumeth with-
out all reuerence to approach vnto
thy gate.

And he which commeth thereinto,
muſt proceede with all reuerence
and humilitie, ioined with good
hope, that hee maie finde grace to be
admitted.

Wherefore both humble, and re-
uerendlie and deuoutlie, and boldlie
I goe to thee-ward.

Let the godlie loue of thy name
liſten then what I ſaie.

The heauen reioiceth, the earth
wondereth, when by faith mine hart
ſaith, Chriſt is my Sauour.

Satan ſlieth, hell trembleth, when
my conſcience crieth, Chriſt is my
Sauour.

The

The fourth booke

The world waxeth vile, and the flesh humble, when as a Christian dooth saie, Christ is my Sauior.

Sorowe departeth, newe comfort approacheth, when my minde pronounceth, Christ is my Sauior.

Slothfulnes vanisheth, mine hart through loue fainteth, when zealouslie I can saie, Christ is my Sauior.

Zeale encreaseth, compunction ariseth, hope groweth, comfort waxeth strong, when my soule soundeth, Christ is my Sauior.

Mine harte is iocund, mine affection becommeth sounde, when in truth I do saie, Christ is my Sauior.

For such is the force of these words vttered of a faithfull soule, that no man is able to expresse the same in wordes, but still it resteth more hie and excellent, than maie be reached vnto by the wit of man.

Which maketh mee once againe most humble to bowe my knees vnto thee, O blessed Sauior, and still I saie, O Christ my Sauior.

O most gracious Iesu receaue my praier, and mee with it, that I maie finde some what that maie like thee well, and embolden mee, and kindle my

of the Imitation of Christ.

my zeale, and keepe mee euermore in continuall prailing of thine holic Name.

Oah that for the satisfieng my desire to praise, and to praie vnto thee from the verie bottome of mine hart, both all my members were forthwith conuerted into tongues, and those tongues into fire voices, that I might finde a waie to glorifie thee, my Sauour, world without ende!

Oah that for all my sins wherewith I haue deserued thine indignacion, offended greuouslie thy Father, and dishonored thee with all the hoste of heauen, I might once so thoroughlie bewaile, and repent, that I might heereafter take a newe trade of life to thy glorie, and the comforte of my soule!

Oah that thou woldest assist mee in well doing, seeing my life fraile and I all subiect to offending!

Oah pardon and forgiue all my sins either wilfullie, or negligentlie committed, all my vaine thoughtes, my vngodlie speech, my abhominable deedes!

O most gracious Iesu, I saie, doo thou both defend mee from doing
anie

The fourth booke

anie wickednes hereafter, and forgiue, I praie thee, all my sins forpast: so shall I be both the more deuout, the more zelous, and the more carefull in saieng, thou Christ art my Sauior both in mine hart, and with my mouth, in companie, and in my chamber, and in the garden, and in the field, and in all places where-soeuer I shall bee.

And now, what more shall I aske of thee, o Christ my Sauior?

What is better, or more profitable, or more necessarie especiallie for mee a great sinner, than to finde fauor in thy sight, o Christ my Sauior?

And therefore it is that I haue desired, and still do craue, euen that by thine intercession and meanes I maie haue the grace of God thy Father, who, as both thy selfe hast said, and the Apostle doth witnesse, hast all power giuen thee both in heauen
* Mat. 28, 8 and earth *.

There is no praier more welcome to thee, than this is, nor anie thing more necessarie for mee, than the grace and fauor of God.

If I haue the grace of God, what-soeuer else I do wante, I am rich enough.

enough.

For what is all mine endeuoring if I lack that? Againe, what can I not doo, if I be assisted and holpen thereby?

I see that manie and diuers are my wicked affections: but yet against all passions the grace of God is a most effectuall medicine; and if once it come, it will mitigate them all.

I doo also stand in neede of spirituall wisedome and knowledge: but the grace of God is a most excellent teacher, and instructor of heauenlie knowledge, and is able euen suddenly to instruct mee in whatsoever things are necessarie vnto saluacion.

For to require more than is necessarie, or to desire to vnderstand more than is lawfull to be knowen, is against the will of God, whose pleasure is that wee should be humbled vnder his hand, and contented with his grace.

Wherefore obtaine this grace for mee, o Christ, which is so noble and pretious, that in deed I ought neither to desire or craue any other thing than grace for grace.

The fourth booke

CHAP. 24.

A Praier for comfort vnto
Iesus Christ.

Psal. 45, 2



*Race is poured in-
to thy lips*

Oah my Lord, I be-
seeche thee, at the
length now vouchsafe
to speake vnto mee, ô Christ.

Open thy mouth in thine owne
name, who art full of all spirituall
graces ^b.

Iohn. 1, 16

L.

I am the fountaine of mercie; full
of loue and sweetnes.

I am the ladder for finners; the
hope and pardon of the guiltie.

I am the comfort of the sorowfull,
and the speciall ioie of all sanctes.

Come vnto mee so manie as loue
mee, and fill your selues at the breasts
of my comfort; because I am good
and mercifull to all which crie vnto
mee.

Come vnto mee both righteous
and finners, I will sue vnto the Fa-
ther for you; I will entreate him to
bee good vnto you, and to fill you
with the holic Ghost.

of the Imitation of Christ.

I call euerie one, I looke for all,
 I desire to haue all to come vnto me;
 I despise no sinner, but with the an-
 gels in heauen I reioice exceeding-
 lie ouer that sinner which repen-
 teth ^c, and so commeth into the fa-
 uor of God: for no one drop of my
 blood which I shed for the world, is
 in vane. ^{c Luk. 15, 10}

Therefore come vnto mee, yee
 sonnes of men, consider and behold
 my zeale for you vnto God my Fa-
 ther.

Lo, I haue taken his wrath vpon
 my selfe, I haue borne his disple-
 sure ^d, yea, and continuallie doo I
 make supplication for you vnto him ^e
 whome you knowe right well you
 haue greuouslie offended. <sup>d Ifai. 53, 1
2, &c.
e 1. Iohn. 2, 1
2</sup>

Turne then, and approach, repent,
 and of my woord you shall haue
 pardon.

For lo, I stand betweene heauen
 and earth, betweene God and sin-
 ners; and that this world perish not,
 I obtaine through my praiers.

Wherefore, abuse not my good-
 nes, and mercie; but beware of of-
 fending, least when you litle thinke
 thereof ^f, indignation be powred vp-
 on you, and intolerable vengeance ^g. <sup>f Mat. 24, 44
g Rom. 2, 8
9</sup>

The fourth booke

I doo forewarne you as children,
I beseech you as freends, be you perfect
as your heauenlie Father is perfect^h.
^h Mat. 5, 48

Forget not mee, who haue bin,
and am, and will be mindfull of you.

For I do both pittie such as are in
miserie, and I do entreate for those
which crie vnto meeⁱ.
ⁱ 1. Ioh. 2, 1

O gracious speech, and full of all
S. comforte!

O heauenlie voice sweetelie dropping
fro heauen to the comforting of
sinners, & reioicing of the righteous!

O celestiaall musick, howe sweetelie
doost thou resounde in a desperate
conscience!

Whence is it that the Sauior of
mankinde will thus talke with mee?

Blessed art thou, O Christo, and
blessed are the wordes of thy mouth.
For honie is vnder thy tongue, and
the sauer of thy speech excelleth
all sweetenes.

My soule was mollesied, so soone
as thou spakest, O Christ.

Behold, no sooner did thy voice
sounded in mine eares, but my soule
within did spring for ioie.

For my spirit reuiued within mee;
and all mine entralls were filled
with

of the Imitation of Christ.

with newe comforte; because good and ioiefull thinges are tolde mee this daie by you.

I was dolefull, but now I am iocund because of your wordes. For your voice is sweete in mine eares.

I was griued and desolate; but now I am reuiued, and made merrie. For thou hast sent thine hande from on hie, and touched mee, whereby of weake, I am become strong.

Scarse could I speake, but now I haue a good minde to sing, and to praise thee highlie.

I was loth to liue, and now I am willing to die, because I haue thee, Christ, for mine aduocate, with the Father, to whose mercie I commend my selfe, euen from this time for euer and euer.

For since first you began to speake vnto the harte of thy desolate orphan, I haue bin changed into a better state, and greatlie comforted in my minde.

I was almost at the doore of desperation, but thy comfort came, and lifted mee vp with these wordes:

What is the matter Sonne? and who are they which would hurt thee? Feare not, I will see vnto thee,

The fourth booke

my sonne.

k Reuel. 1, 4 I doo liue with God my Father **k**,
and I sit at his right hand, beeing a
faithfull hie Priest, and an interces-

l 1. Iohn. 2, 1 for thy sinns **l**.

2 In mee thou shouldest repose thy
m Ioh. 11, 25 trust, because I doo both giue life **m**,
n 1. Cor. 15, and destroie death **n**.

verse **55** I was incarnate of a virgine in

o Math. 1, 18 time **o**, but of my Father begotten
19, &c. before all times **p**, and when the ful-

p Psal. 2, 7 nes of time came, I suffered for mans

Hebr. 1, 5 saluation **q**.

q Gal. 4, 4 **5** Lo, I am the hope and comfort of
the godlie, and by mee is faith and

r 1. Cor. 15, victorie attained **r**.

verse **57** And therefore let neither mee, nor
these things be out of thy minde, and
thou wilt not feare anie dartes of
Satan.

S. Oah happie houre! o blessed state,
that my Lord and Sauior will vouch-
safe to comfort on this wise my trub-
led hart!

Oah that I might still heare thy
so comfortable words, for greatlie
doo theie inflame, and moue mee,
and touch mee euen at the verie
harre!

O blessed Christ, thou neuer ces-
sest to send forth the sweete milke of
heauen-

of the Imitation of Christ.

heauenlie consolation!

For by reason of the abundance of thy grace, thou canst not denie fauor to such as craue the same at thine hands; yet often thou showest much mercie euen to the verie sinner ^f.

^f Math. 5, 45

O Christ, thou excellest in pittifulnes, in mercie, and in louing/

O Sauior, to whome none is to be compared, thou art aboue all to be loued, and to be worshipped.

O Sonne of God, by whome wee are also the sonnes of God ^f, and of whome we are called Christians ^u, thou art of all good men to be serued most religiouslie, and aboue all ^b.

^f Gal. 4, 6

^u 7

^b Act. 17, 26

^b Mat. 4, 10

^b 1 Joh. 3, 16

^b Reuel. 1, 5

^b 6

^b Hebr. 1, 6

^b 7, &c.

^b Mark. 1, 13

^b Math. 4, 10

^b 11

^b Mark. 5, 7

^b 8

^b 9, &c.

^b 1. Pet. 3, 24

^b 25

O freend of all freends ^x, King of heauen and earth ^z, Lord of angels ^a, conqueror of diuels ^b, drawe mee after thee, least I fall, and so rest vnder the heauie burden of sin.

Poure out thy grace, send mee thy comfortable dewe from aboue, that trulie I maie perceaue, how thou art the procurer, and the open fountance of all mercie ^e.

I am in deede the spring of holie loue, and of chaste and religious feare, of godlie conference, and of sweete consolation.

Therefore when you doo heare

k 4

my

The fourth booke

my name, reioice with your whole hart, and magnifie the goodnes of your God.

In honoring mee, you honor the

^d Iohn. 1. 1 Father which is God as I am ^a. For

^{21. 2. 3. 8. c.} I am Iesus the Sonne of God ^e, and

^o Math. 1. 18 this name shal I haue while the world

²⁰

^f 1. Cor. 15. ^o But what is Iesus? euen the Sonne

verse ²⁸ of the liuing God ^s; the Sauior of

^g Math. 16. the world ^h; the King of heauen and

verse ¹⁶ the world ^h; the King of heauen and

^h Math. 1. 21 earth ⁱ; the Lord of Angels ^k; the

^{1. Pet. 1. 18} redeemer of the faithfull ^l; and the

¹⁹

ⁱ Reu. 17. 14 iudge of quick and dead

^{Reuel. 19. 16} And what is Iesus? the hope of the

^h Dan. 7. 18 godlie; the comfort of the desolate;

^{Hebr. 1. 8} the peace of the meeke; the riches of

^{7. & c.} the poore; the glorie of the humble;

^{Gal. 3. 12} the strength of the weake; the waie

^{1. Cor. 10. 4} of such as wander, the light of such as

^{1. Cor. 10. 4} see not; the staff of such as walke not;

¹¹ the oile of such as feeble not; the staie

^{7. 2. 1. 1} of the oppressed; the helpe of the

⁸ treobled; and the singular refuge of

^{1. Mat. 11. 28} all good men ^p.

^{2. Cor. 1. 12} Blesse the Sonne with the Father,

²² and so God will blesse you.

Give honor also and glorie to the

Father, whensoever you praise mee.

His glorie, is my ioye, and my

praise, is his worship.

Therefore

Place

of the Imitation of Christ.

Place mee and the Father as a
seale vpon thine hart, and as a token
vpon thine arme.

Therefore sit you, or stand you, or
praie, or reade, or wright, or worke
you, let my name Iesus and God be
often reuerendlie in your mouth,
but continuallie in your harte.

O grante it maie be so good Iesus; S. 1. 1. 1. 1.
and let all people, tribes, and tonges
serue thee; and let all creatures bowe
at thy presence.

Let heauen saie, Raigne thou Iesus;
let the earth make answer, yea for
euer and euer let him raigne.

Yea, let all Sanctes confesse thy
glorious Name, and all good people
reioice before the Father, and

thee his lambe; and our
Lord Iesus Christ,
Amen.

o Iohn. 1. 29

P Rom. 1. 3

7



CHAP.

The fourth booke

CHAP. 25.

That for God his benefits we are
so thanke him.



Blessed be the glo-
rious Name of the Lord
for evermore.

a Psal. 72, 19

b Ioh. 20, 17

O Lord my God

c 1. Cor. 10,
verse 31

let all my doings, all
my reading, all my wrighting, my
thoughtes, words, and vnderstan-
ding, tend vnto the aduancement of
thine honor. Yea, let mee both begin my busines
in thy Name, and goe forward in thy
feare, and finish it with thy blessing.

d 1. Ioh. 1, 9

That which thou hast giuen, that
receaue againe; and from whence
the streames doe flowe, thether let
them returne.

It neuer goeth better with mee,
neither dooth it realish better to my
soule, than when vnfeinedlie I deo
ascribe all to thee, whatsoeuer I haue
either don, or thought as I should.

My desire is to render thanks,
which I then doe as I ought, when
for that I haue receaued, and thou
hast giuen, I ascribe all praise to thee,
and

of the Imitation of Christ.

and nothing to my selfe.

For what can I, a wicked and vnprofitable seruant, render vnto thee my God? Alas, all that I can doo, yea, if I should doo all which thou commaundest to be doon, it is to none effect ^d.

^d Luk. 17, 10

So that I am brought vnto nothing, and rightlie humbled. And in deepe it is verie well that I am so brought downe ^e, that thou alone maist bee iustified ^f, and haue the praise of all, and that vile dust & maie at no time glorie in it selfe.

^e Psal. 119,

verse 71

^f Psal. 51, 4

^g Eccles. 19,

verse 9

Howbeit, I minde not to surcesse, but will extoll thee both with hart and mouth. For albe I discharge not my dutie therein as I ought: yet ought I to speake of thy goodnes, and not be silent.

O my God, thou art my glorie; my praise shall alwaies be of thee ^h.

^h Psal. 71, 6

He that would but a little consider of thy glorie, and knowe what it is to glorie in the Lord ⁱ; how would he despise all outward glorie!

ⁱ Iere. 9, 24

He that would, euen but a little taste of thy sweetnes; how quicklie would he loath, as most bitter, the pleasure of this world!

He which would receaue euen but

The fourth booke

a small sparcke of loue into his breaste, howe would hee burne in affection! For full gladlie would hee contemne all thinges to haue thy freendship: and would count it all sweete, and easie to be borne, whatsoever he should doo, or suffer for thy loue sake ^k.

*Rom. 8, 35

Hee that would consider in his minde thy goodnes to man-ward; how would he reioice, and run after thee! Hee would seeke nothing so charelie, he would keepe nothing so warelie, he would pursue nothing so egerlie, as to serue thee. For in following, he would feelee no burden ^l, because loue would beare all burdens.

1 Sal. 5. 8, 6

So then theie which complaine of the burden, doo plainlie declare how theie haue litle true loue in them.

To serue of loue, is of all others the greatest pleasure, and comfort in labor.

True loue dooth neither respect commoditie, nor feare damage, but in all things seeketh that which may please thee.

Oah Christ, how sweete is thy loue, how well dooth it found, how sweetlie dooth it enter, how stronglie dooth it binde!

Oah

of the Imitation of Christ.

Oah that it would fast binde mee
to thy continuall seruice ! oah that it
would wholie take me, and wholie
subdue me, and wholie and altoget-
her make me to be thine !

For then, and not before am I free,
when I am taken of thy loue, and vt-
terlie depriued from all that mine is.

O my Lord, I am thy seruant^m, yea ^m Psa. 143, 12
thy seruant am I, because thou hast
redeemed meeⁿ.

I am thy seruant with a verie good
will, and am not ashamed to be pro-
perlie thine. ⁿ 1. Cor. 6, 20
¹ 1. Cor. 7, 33
¹ 1. Pet. 1, 19

I wish not to be mine owne man
again, and therefore, Lord, helpe
mee, that I maie be freed from that
which naturallie is mine.

Oah blowe, and kindle, and in-
flame the fire of my zeale, so shall
mine hart boile, and become pure,
cleare, and pleasant: for thy loue ex-
pelleth vice, and consumeth sin.

Laie thou fast hold vpon the band
of loue, and I shall stand and conti-
nue in thy seruice.

Full well I wot, no good can my
seruice doo you, Lord; but all the
benefit redoundeth to my selfe, if I
doo that which I knowe is acceptable
in thy sight,

Would

The fourth booke

Would I did, and hid not, that I reuealed, and concealed not thy workes, Lord!

When shall I be able worthelie to consider the manifold benefits conferred vpon mee of God!

Mercifullie hast thou delt with thy seruant, O Lord; but alack, I neuer thanked thee for the same, as thou deseruedst.

And therefore am I punished, and pinched at the verie harte, euen because I am vnable to answere thy benefits so great, and so manifold.

Oah that I could euen but once worthelie, and thoroughlie thanke thee for all these things!

But what maie proceede from him, in whome nothing is? An emptie vessell, can minister no drinke.

What then shall I doe? Something I must giue. For it is not lawfull to come before God with an emptie hand. Because the Lord abhorreth

• Luke. 17. the vngreatfull man •.

verse 17

Oah that I could finde something in this world to giue you that might be acceptable in your sight!

Oah my Lord, whome in hart I loue, what would you that I should giue you?

As

of the Imitation of Christ.

As for anie good thing of mine
 you neede it not P. And whie then P Psal. 50. 12
 exact you a gift at mine hands? For
 riches none is comparable to you,
 and yet require you some-what of
 mee?

That which I demaunde is euen L.
 your selfe wholie. For so it is expe-
 dient if you would purchase my fa-
 uour.

I will giue grace to you, and you
 shall shewe grace to mee, and so
 loue shall be continued betweene

vs.
 Give mee your selfe, and you haue
 giuen euen all.

O good Iesus, the fountaine of all S.
 goodnes, the fountaine of life, the
 fountaine of grace, the fountaine of
 sweetnes, the verie fountaine of all
 lasting wisdom, powre vpon mee,
 such as this instant, I beseech thee,
 the gift of thy celestiall grace, and
 teach mee to be gratefull, and to giue
 my selfe before all thinges wholie
 vnto you, for this is the deereft thing
 that I can render.

This I also knowe, and acknow-
 ledge. Therefore receaue mee, for I
 am wholie thine, and all that mine
 is, is thine.

Onlie

The fourth booke

Onlie one thing there is which I cannot giue; and that is my sin, which is mine indeede properlie, and therefore not to be imputed vnto thee.

Sinne mine is; and all defaultes within me are to be ascribed to me onlie; but glorie, and for all thy benefites thanks be vnto thee.

But nowe in calling thy benefites into minde, of manie I gather onlie a fewe, and those which doo most of all moue mee, and appeere in my mind. For neither wil the time suffer to recite, neither can my thoughtes

[1st. Cor. 2, 9] comprehend them all.

Because for number theie are infinite, for greatnes incomprehensible, and inestimable for goodnes. For

[¹ Mat. 10, 8] brought theie cannot bee, because

[Iam. 1, 17] theie are freele giuen. And there-

[¹ Mat. 23, 28] fore onlie thanks be required for

[¹ Mat. 4, 10] them, otherwise all shall be taken

[¹ Iohn. 1, 1] away, as from that vagratefull one.

First therefore and afore all things,

[Colos. 1, 13] I thanke thee, o Lord my God, cre-

ator of all things, for making mee

a man, after thine image and simili-

[¹ Gen. 1, 27] tude, and for placing mee ouer the

[Psal. 119, 73] workes of thine hands.

[¹ Psalm. 8, 6] This is the great, and first benefite

7, &c.

oilnO

besto-

bestowed vpon mee, and that of thy
meere goodnes.

For I made not my selfe, but thine
handes did fashion mee ^a, thee ^a Psal. 100, 3
brought me into this world through
my parents ^a, whome thy will was, ^a Psal. 139, 13
should serue thee herein. ^{15, &c.}

And lo, I am better than other
creatures, exalted aboue the beastes
of the fielde, and birdes of the aer ^b; ^b Gen. 1, 28
in that I am facioned after thine i- ^{Wisd. 9, 2}
mage ^c, endued with eternall wise- ^c 1 Cor. 11, 7
dome, and naturallie participate of
the light vncreate, and of the vn-
changeable truth.

Wherefore for my beeing, liuing,
and vnderstanding, I giue thee euer-
lasting praise, wishing and desiring
herewithall that all creatures both
in heauen and earth, maie euerla-
stinglie commend thy glorious and
most excellent name.

I blesse thee, O Father, Lord of
heauen and earth ^d, who of nothing ^d Psal. 97, 1
through thy onlie begotten Sonne ^{Psal. 99, 1}
Iesus Christ in the holie Ghost, hast
created all things ^e. ^e Iohn. 1, 1

Yea al things thou hast made, not of
necessitie compelled, but of pure and ^{Hebr. 1, 2}
special loue moued therunto, thereby
to shewe thy power vnto the sons of
men;

The fourth booke

^fPsal. 145, 4 men ^f; and by thine inuisible and
coeternall wisdom with thee, thou
hast most perfectlie disposed this vi-
^sWisd. 9, 1 sible world ^s.

Let all thy creatures subiect in all
^hMat. 28, 18 things to thee ^h, and ordeined for
ⁱGen. 1, 28 the vse of man ⁱ, blesse thee.

For at thy commandement both
raine falleth from heaven, and fructe
springeth from the earth:

The sunne shineth brightlie in the
daie time, the starres giue light by
course in the night:

The fountaines spring, the riuers
flowe, and fishes of diuers kinds doe
swim:

The birdes not onlie flie, but sing
also; and the goates, the coltes, and
hartes, doe spring vpon the moun-
taines:

The sheepe and other cattell doe
ioie in good pasture, and diuers o-
ther liuing creatures doe run about
the grooues:

The ground waxeth greene, the
fieldes prosper, and trees of the wood
doe yeeld both bowes and fructe.

O Lord, which onlie doost won-
^{*Psal. 71, 18}derous things ^t, euen all these are
thy woorkes.

Another benefit which thou hast
bestowed

bestowed vpon mee, is the mysterie
of incarnation ¹, the worke of my ¹ 1. Tim. 3, 16
redemption, the price of our salua-
tion, euen the fructe of thy passion
and death.

O greate worke of mercie! Oah
worke of moste excellent loue ^m, ^m Rom. 5, 8
moste abiect humilitie ⁿ, of moste ⁿ Phil. 2, 5
rare patience ^o! ^{6, &c.}

No man could merit, nor Angel
procure this thing. ^o 1. Pet. 2, 21
^{22, &c.}

The Prophets haue wondered at
it; the Apostles haue scene & taught
it; the faithfull haue embraced it;
and the elect especiallie doo loue,
and call it into minde.

The due consideration of this be-
nefit stirreth vp good desires; infla-
meth the harte; nurisheth deuotion;
inlighteneth the minde; purgeth
the affection; draweth on to heauen-
ward; with-draweth from the world;
driueth vnto God; and vniteth the
soule with Christ.

This benefit far excelleth the a-
boue mentioned: yet there is one
which gaue each, and hath bestowed
both of them vpon vs, euen our Lord
Iesus Christ.

For what the better had I bin for
my life, if I had not bin redeemed
with

The fourth booke

with the pretious blood of my Sa-
 ¶ Gal. 3, 13 uior Christ p

Therefore the grace, and mercie
 of God grewe vpon me, and plente-
 ¶ Psa. 130, 7 ous redemption was made ¶: for the
 corrupted nature of man without the
 aide of God his maker, could neuer
 haue bin repared.

O Father of mercies, and God of
 ¶ 2. Cor. 1, 3 all comfort ¶, thou, to redeeme thy
 ¶ Ephes. 2, 3 damned seruant ¶, hast giuen thine
 ¶ Rom. 8, 32 onlie Sonne to the death ¶.

O wonderfull kindnes of thine to
 vs-ward, vnto which, neither the
 wit of man, nor the vnderstanding of
 ¶ 2. Tim. 3, 16 Angels can attaine ¶! But alone,
 sweete Christe, who art the begin-
 ning and the ende of our saluation,
 and alone couldst helpe the mise-
 rable, and dammed, thou alone art
 primum to the same.

For thou didest vouchsafe to ap-
 peere vnto the world in the likenes
 ¶ Phil. 2, 5 of a most vile seruant ¶; and for mor-
 ¶ Ecclus. 10, 6 tall wormes ¶ euen of meere pittie
 verse 9 receauedst with a willing minde the
 ¶ Gal. 3, 13 iudgement of a cruell death ¶.

O good Iesus, thou which art the
 fountaine of mercie, the light of aie
 lasting glorie, the pure glasse with-
 ¶ Wisd. 7, 26 out spot of God his maiestie ¶, kinde
 mine

mine harte with the meditation of
this vnspeakeable benefit, bestowed
vpon mee, and vpon all mankinde ^b.

^b Rom. 5, 15
16, & 6.

But this, as was the former, is gene-
rall, sufficient to saue all, but not effe-
ctual in all, by reason of the incredul-
litie, and malice of manie: howbeit
it saueth, and is profitable to all the
elect, for whose sake all things were
created, and be, as I maie saie, created
again, through thee my Sauior.

O good Iesus, how manifold are
the benefits brought vnto vs by
thine humanitie!

Thou becamest our brother, and
flesh of our flesh ^c, that we might be
compted the children of God ^d, and
haue access vnto the Father tho-
rough thee ^e, the fire of whose disple-
sure none could quench, but thou
alone of whome himselfe did saie ^f:
This is my beloued Sonne, in whome I am
well pleased.

^c Iohn. 1, 14
^d Gal. 4, 6
7

^e I. Iohn. 2, 1
2
^f Mat. 3, 17
Math. 17, 5

Happie is the soule, which earnest-
lie recordeth, and hartelie loueth, &
worthelie extolleth the sacraments
of our redemption; and for them
thanketh thee; and finallie depen-
deth vpon thy counsaile, more than
vpon her owne sense.

For none is meete to search out, no
wise-

The fourth booke

wisedome can reach into this myste-
rie, onlie it is the strength of beliefe,
and the purenes of the hart lighte-
ned from aboute ^e, that beholdeth
the same.

Oah, blessed is hee that is worthie
to receaue that by grace, which the
wise of the world could not vnder-
stand by nature ^h!

Of sweete Iesu, the wisdom of the
Father, make mee in the light of
faith to knowe this great and woun-
derfull myste-
rie of thine incarnati-
on ⁱ, for therein the sweetenes of
our whole saluation lieth, and there-
by the rarest freendship that euer
was seene appeereth ^k, and through
it the vnsearchable fulnes of thy
wisdom glittereth moste glori-
ouslie.

Oah let thy seruant growe on still
in godlines, in the studie of well doo-
ing, and more and more in this me-
morable secreat of thine incarnati-
on, make mee acquainted with the
myste-
rie of thine holie passion, and
drawe mee wholie into the medita-
tion of thy workes!

The declaration of this loue, and
humilitie, is a wonderfull deep, and
a certaine celestially sea, which maie
not

not be swoon ouer, wherein doo swim
too and fro the spirituall fishes both
small and greate, which thou hast
taken within the net of faith.

Wherefore let this thy so greate
loue and sweetenes, thine so greate
humilitie and kindenes abide still in
my remembrance; let it alwaie re-
maine in euerie sacrifice of praier
that I am to make; and in all mine
holie exercises let there bee some-
what, as plesant frankincense, and
delightfull spices, for a sweete smel-
ling sauer to be offered vnto God the
Father, concerning the mysterie of
thine incarnation and passion.

Let now then such as thou hast
redeemed, I saie whome thou hast
redeemed out of the hande of the
enemie¹, sing out with mee the song¹ *Luke 1, 74*
of thine heauenlie praise, and of in-
warde ioie together with thankes-
giving.

Yea, let all the Angels standing a-
bout thy throne, fall vpon their fa-
ces, and worship the lambe of God,
who hath taken awaie the sins of the
world^m, saieingⁿ:

Praise, and glorie, and wisdom,
and thanks, and honor, and power,
and might, bee vnto our Lord Iesus
Christ

^m Iohn. 1, 29ⁿ Reue. 7, 12

The fourth booke

Christ for euermore, Amen.

A third benefit, not inferior to the former, is the grace of iustification, whereby of thy goodnes thou hast drawn mee vnto repentance, and amendement of life, forgiuing my sins, and giuing mee both hope of pardon, and willingnes to do well, and to serue thee euermore.

This after Paul dulie had considered, he adhorteth his disciples to be both thankfull for so great a benefit, and also mindefull of the heauenlie grace, and to studie to shewe themselves worthie so spirituall a calling:

1. Cor. 1. 26 Brethren, saith he °, you see your calling, howe that not manie wise men after the flesh, nor manie mightie, nor manie noble are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confounde the wise.

These things I consider in my selfe, who notwithstanding I am contemptible, and vnmeete for this world: yet by thine holie calling, am I saued from the shipwrack of the same vnto thine holie seruice. And this I ascribe wholie not vnto anie goodnes of mine, but vnto thy prouidence.

For the which, I extoll thy goodnes, and blesse thee, euen I say, for calling
ling

ling me gratiouſlie, for giuing mee a
deſire to pleaſe thee, for pardoning
all my ſins; for putting me vnder thy
ſweete yoake, ſoftening mine harte
with the oile of thy ſpirit, whome
the world neither knoweth, neither
ſeeth, nor ſauoreth.

O mercifull Ieſu, keepe me in this
minde, I beſeech thee, encrease thy
giſtes of grace within mee more and
more, ſo long as I remaine in this
viſible light.

I perceauē right well this calling
of mine is a greate benefit, not giuen
to all men, but onlie to ſuch as God
the Father hath ordained there-
vnto: becauſe it is not in him that
willeth, nor in him that runneth, but
in God that ſhoweth mercie ^p, that
euerie mouth maie be ſtopped ^q, and
all the world culpable before God;
and that no fleſh ſhould reioice in
thy preſence ^r, nor aſcribe anie of
their owne vertues, or good works, to
themſelues.

p Rom. 9, 16

q Rom. 3, 19

r 1. Cor. 1, 29

For if thou ſhouldeſt deale with
mee in iuſtice, alas, I were then dam-
ned with the curſſed ſpirits in hell.

But of thy goodnes, o Lord, thou
haſt ſpared mee, and forgiven my
ſins, whereby I am not as the childe

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of perdition.

And therefore am I bounde to render great thanks vnto thee for so excellent a benefite; and would to God, both in my speech, and in my life, all the daies of my life, I might answere my calling!

But Lord, in steede of all thanks, receaue I beseech thee, my poore seruice, whereby I desire, and in deede am bound to serue thee.

Grante also that the debt of my seruice maie proceede from the hart, and finallie agree to thy will and honor; and that mine hart be neuer turned from thy loue, but that both my soule and bodie maie alike watch and perseuere daie and night in thine holie seruice, euen so long as life is within my bodie, and I haue my wits to remember thee; let thy praise be neuer out of my mouth, nor the remembrance of thy manifold benefites slip out of mine hart.

And if thy seruant shall yet liue manie yeeres, either an hundred, or howe manie soeuer, grante that I maie not proue luke-warme, or abashed at thy seruice, but be euen so zelous and so willing to serue thee, as I was at the first houre and daie
when

when mine harte was admonished
and confirmed of thee, euen with a
pure and whole minde onlie to fol-
lowe thee my Lord.

Neither let anie infirmitie or
aduersitie hinder my purpose; but
euen as now I meane, and purpose
in the hearing of thee my God: so I
beseech thee giue grace, that what
nowe I haue promised, I maie per-
forme.

And although through my in-
firmitie and faultes this my course
shall be broken, as there is no man so
righteous vpon earth but hee sin-
neth; yet suffer me not to despeire,
and to faint vtterlie, but put into my
minde forthwith to bowe the knees
of mine harte, and with much sor-
rowe and teares to offer vnto thee
my wofull and wounded conscience
to be healed with the salue of thy
mercie, and that my purpose maie
be bound more surelie than euer it
was.

2. Chro. 6,
verse 36

Let mee neuer repent mee of this
couenant, but still giue thanks that
I haue founde such fauor in thine
cies, as to be accepted into thine ho-
lie warfare.

Thou canst, o almightie and all
merci-

1 Eze. 10, 5
1. Cor. 6, 18

The fourth booke

a Wisd. 13, mercifull God ^a, who hast of no-
 verfe ²⁰ thing created mee ^x, and foreseest
 2. Cor. 1, 3 the fall, and infirmitie of man; thou
 1 Gen. 1, 26 art able, I saie, and that thou wilt I
 Psal. 100, 3 beseech thee, forgieue the sins which
 I haue committed; supplie what I
 haue omitted; restore what I haue
 lost; heale what is sick; cleanse what
 is vncleane; lighten what is darke;
 assuage that which swelleth; inflame
 what is quenched; repaire that is
 broken; recouer that is neglected;
 amende what is awrie; make plaine
 what is rouged; restraine what is cu-
 rious; call home that which wan-
 dereth; place what is out of order;
 yea, and alter the whole state of
 my minde, that nothing be wanting
 to my former purpose, and let all
 occasion of euill worke for the best
 vnto mee, I moste humble desire
 thee.

This change, is made by the
 right hand of God; this is God his
 visitation; this is the manifelde
 conference of the diuine good-
 nes.

In steede of all thanks, accept
 the deuoure seruice of thine holie
 Church where-so-euer, with the
 sweete

sweete praises of the whole courte of
heauen.

And let all the sanctes from the
beginning of the world, which tho-
rough thy grace haue bin enlighte-
ned and called; yea and all the faith-
full and Christian people which ei-
ther be in the world, or haue bin
afore vs, or shall liue hereafter, let
them I saie together celebrate and
praise thy all sweete and glorious
name, which is aboue all names to
be blessed.

7 Phil. 2, 9

10

Let them repeate againe, and a-
gaine with greate ioie, repeate all
praises dulle and deseruedlie to be
saide of thy name, and that so ma-
nie times, as there be either in the
heauen, stars; or in the sea, fishes; or
in the earth, cornes; or in the Bible,
letters.

And all this being doon, yet must
I saie, theie haue not praised thy
name sufficientlie, the which I de-
sire to commende euen to the vt-
termost of my strength, and by all
meanes to extoll, vntill I attaine vn-
to those praises, which now cannot
be expressed by the voice of mortall
men.

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So that thou seest now my Soule,
the greatenes and the excellencie
of God thy creator and redeemer
his benefits, the which no creature,
nor all creatures may recompense,
whome hee hath made vnto the
praise and glorie of his eternall and
blessed name ^x, who needeth no
glorie, but is alone all sufficient for
himselfe; hee that is what he is ^a,
is his owne glorie.

The number of his benefits was so
greate, that I could not place them
all before thine eies; and therefore
of a greate manie I choafe three pre-
cious giftes, euen as the Wisemen
did, which were about to offer to
the Lord ^b, wherein I thought good
to comprehend the rest.

For euerie benefit of God, if you
marke well, is either of nature, or of
grace, or of superexcellencie: and
whatsoever else is, maie fullie bee
referred vnto one of these three
kinds.

In the Creation, you haue the be-
nefit of nature; in the Redemption,
the benefit of superexcellencie; in
our Iustification, note the benefit of
grace.

For

of the Imitation of Christ.

For all which, and for euerie
of them, glorie be to thee, O
sacred Trinitie, one equall
deitie, both before all
worldes, nowe, and
for euermore.

Amen.

• Reu. 17, 12

The ende of the fourth Booke.



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FINIS.



AT LONDON,
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